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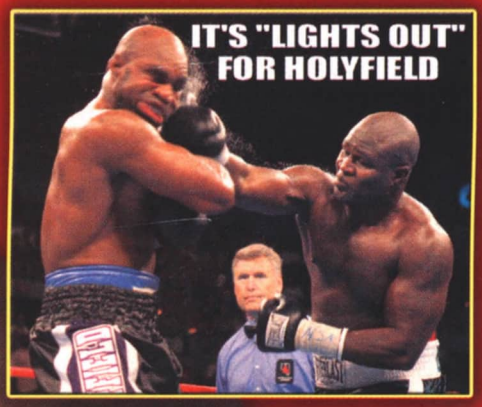

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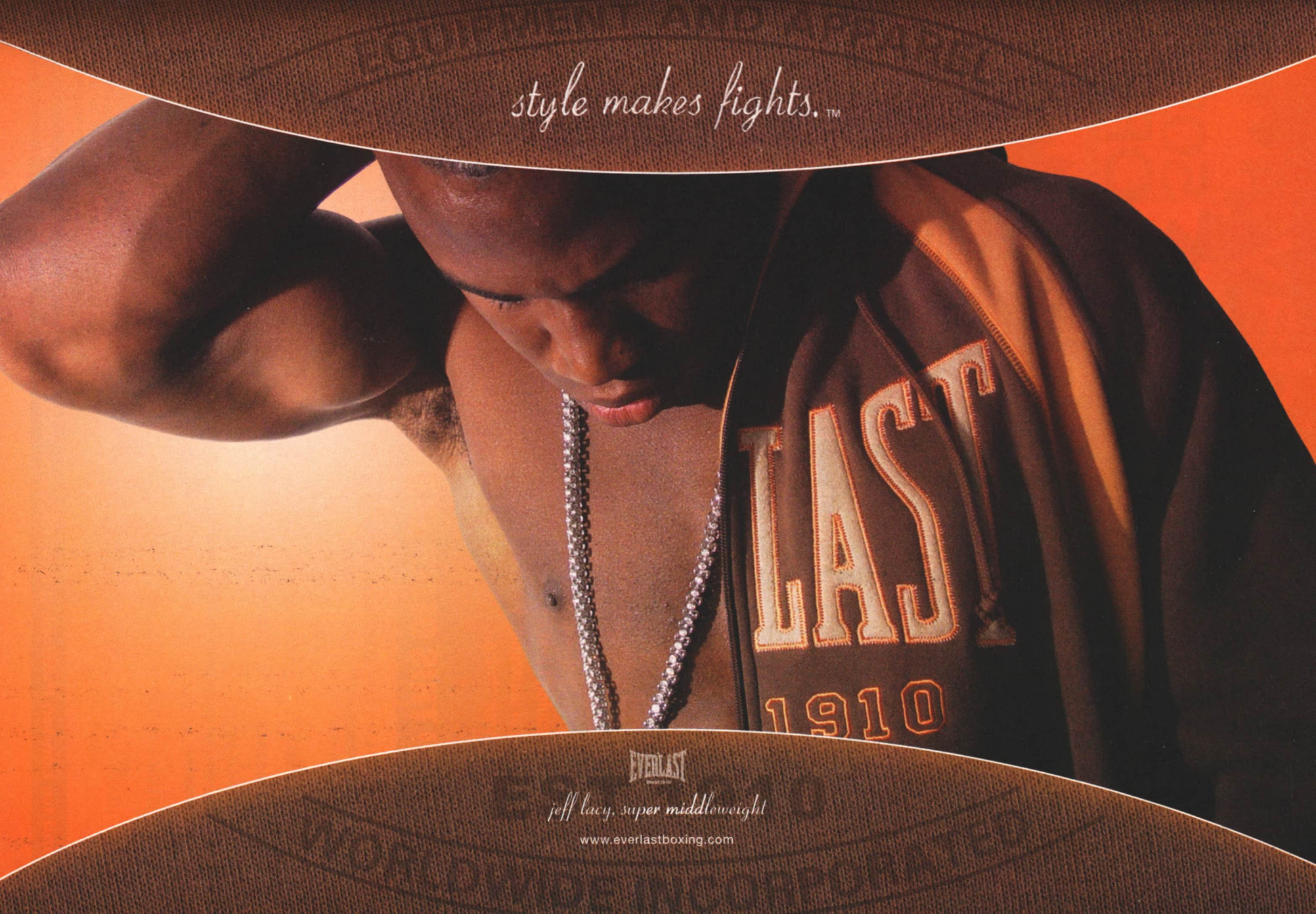
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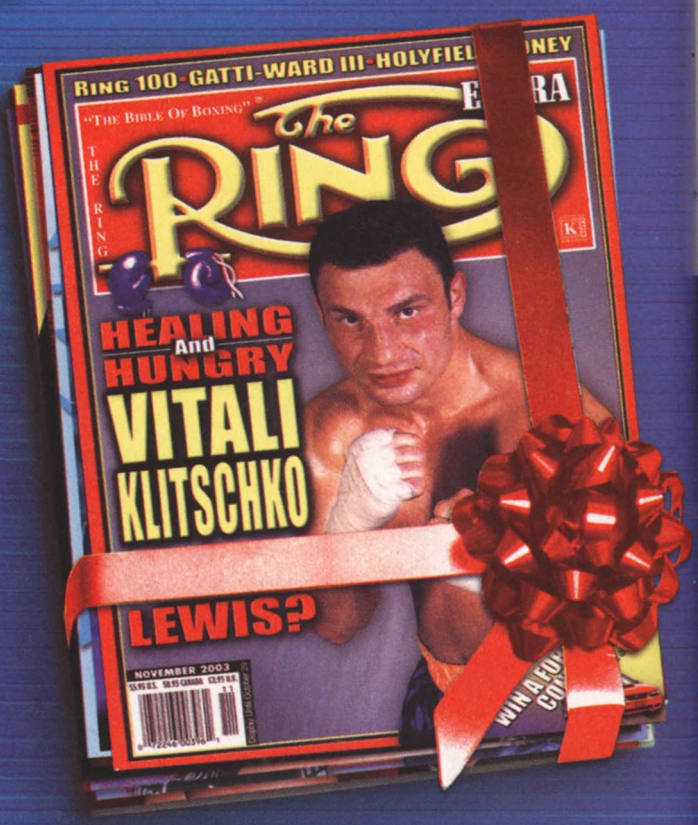

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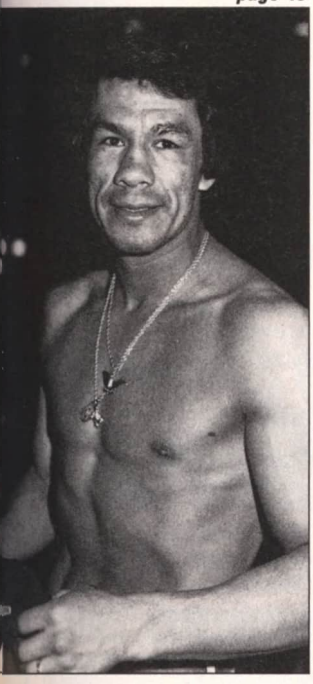

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by Jan Sanders

Cover Design:
Joe Kalman

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RINGSIDE

If THE RING accused a member of the Nevada State Athletic Commission of rigging the judging panel for the Shane Mosley-Oscar De La Hoya rematch, we would be sued for libel. But Bob Arum did exactly that and got away with it without any repercussions whatsoever.

I have no problem with Arum ranting and raving about a decision he doesn't like. We all do that; it's part of boxing. But when you publicly accuse somebody of doing something illegal, you cross a line, and if you don't have any proof to back up your allegation, there should be consequences.

Perhaps Dr. Flip Homansky, the commission member Arum slandered, plans some civil action. But the regulating body Dr. Homansky serves has decided to accept Arum's apology and let it go at that. In doing so, the NSAC has not only failed to support one of its own, it has dishonored the sport and undermined its own authority.

I don't want Arum banned from boxing, or even suspended. Overall, the promoter has been very good for the sport and deserves the plaque he has hanging on the wall at the International Boxing Hall of Fame. But some sort of disciplinary action was certainly in order.

The NSAC prides itself on being the best boxing commission in the country, but letting Arum off the hook without even a slap on the wrist bolsters the perception that boxing is as crooked as Arum claimed.

***

Evander Holyfield was very generous to James Toney following "The Real Deal's" TKO loss to "Lights Out." If only Evander would be as generous to himself.

Holyfield hasn't looked like a future Hall of Famer since he knocked out Michael Moorer in 1997. You'd have to be blind (or in denial) not to see how his fighting ability has gradually eroded the last five or six years. It's past time for him to get out.

Hopefully, Evander will decide to call it quits on his own, but if he doesn't, it will be up to others to save him from himself. Often, there are legal restraints that prevent state commissions from pulling a fighter's license, especially if the fighter can still pass all the medical tests. But the same legal ramifications do not apply to TV networks.

New York *Daily News* boxing writer Tim Smith came up with an excellent idea when he wrote that HBO and Showtime, the only two entities that can afford to pay Holyfield the huge purses he receives for his services, should stop buying his fights. Smith interviewed HBO's Ross Greenburg and Showtime's Jay Larkin for the piece, but both of them danced around the topic rather than give definite answers.

THE RING doesn't have the same sort of power as commissions or TV networks, but if Holyfield decides to fight on, I can assure you that the pages of this magazine will be used to campaign against it. I admire Holyfield too much not to.

***

The WBA and WBC have raised the cruiserweight limit to 200 pounds. While never a fan of the division, THE RING accepts this decision. But that does not mean I think there's a need for a super heavyweight class. If the recent success of Roy Jones (193 pounds vs. John Ruiz) and Toney (217 vs. Holyfield) hasn't proven to those calling for a super heavyweight division that bigger isn't necessarily better, they simply aren't paying attention.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 83, No. 2 **February 2004**

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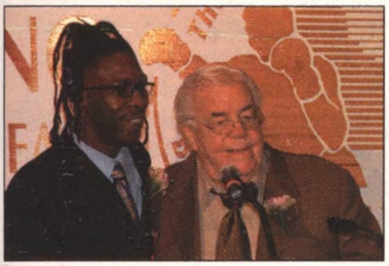
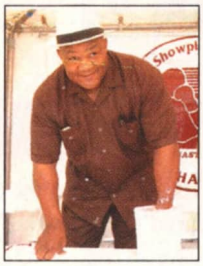


Reminiscing . . . Livingstone Bramble and Lou Duva share fight stories with Banquet crowd.

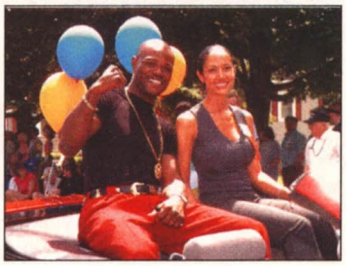
FIST CASTING



Everlasting . . . Fist cast by George Foreman.

PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Marvelous . . . Marvin Hagler waves to fans.



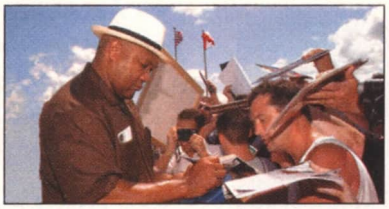
Hooray . . . Terry Norris strikes a fight pose for the fans.

CELEBRITY BOXING NIGHT

ANGEL MANFREDY

Fight Night . . . Popular boxers featured in action-packed bouts at Turning Stone Casino Resort.

MUSEUM GROUNDS



Autographs . . . George Foreman spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

INDUCTION CEREMONY

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GOLF TOURNAMENT

Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

COCKTAIL PARTY

Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM

Ricardo Lopez points to his boxing shoes on display.

WORKOUT SESSIONS

Christy Martin laces up her gloves and Bernard Hopkins hits the speed bag.

RINGSIDE TALKS

Having Fun. . . Frank Bruno and Bert Sugar team up for a ringside lecture.

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ROUND ONE

A LOVABLE LOSER LOSES IT

Not even Mike Tyson hit Frank Bruno as hard the depression that has overwhelmed him since the popular British heavyweight retired from the ring following his second fight with Tyson, in March 1996.

It all came crashing down on the evening of September 22, when police officers and medics removed the former WBC heavyweight titleholder from his home in Essex, England, and took him to Goodmayes Hospital, a nearby psychiatric facility. As we went to press, the 41-year-old Bruno was being detained against his will for 28 days under the provisions of the British Mental Health Act.

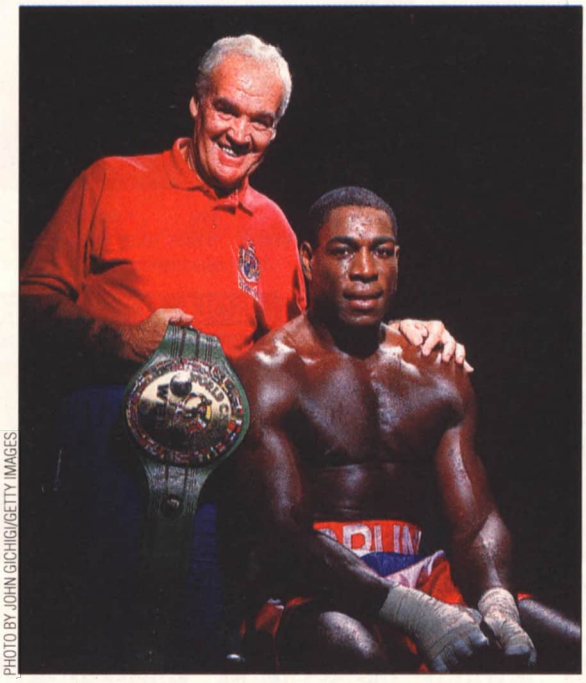


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Bruno and former trainer Francis in much happier times

Bruno's emotional problems had been brewing for some time. While many fighters have difficulty adjusting after their ring careers are over, Bruno's situation was aggravated by a series of personal setbacks, including a divorce from his wife, Laura, in '97.

"Since Frank's marriage ended, he's been incredibly lonely," said promoter Alex Morrison, a close friend of Bruno's for more than 20 years.

"Frank has always lacked self-esteem and has always been a very sensitive chap," said former WBA featherweight titlist Barry McGuigan.

Bruno suffered another blow in April 2002, when his ex-trainer and father figure, George Francis, committed suicide.

According to friends, Bruno had been acting uncharacteristically of late, ducking out on commitments, storming out of restaurants, and getting into an argument with fans at a soccer match.

"He'd become very paranoid," Morrison told the *Sunday Mail*.

What might have pushed Bruno over the edge was the cancer death of Ernie Fossey, a matchmaker and cutman with whom Bruno had a long friendship. Bruno learned of Fossey's death just hours before he was committed.

"I spoke with Frank last Sunday at 8 p.m. and told him Ernie's health had deteriorated," said Morrison. "The next morning, I let him know Ernie had died. He became very upset."

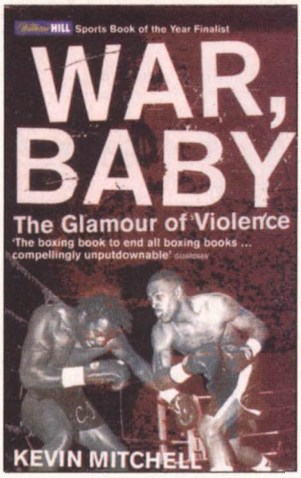
Just as they had during his career, British fans have rallied behind their hero in his hour of need. He has received hundreds of messages from well-wishers, and a Funds For Frank charity has been set up to assist him.

Prior to his illness becoming public, Bruno wanted to make a comeback to fight fellow Englishman Audley Harrison, who won the super heavyweight gold medal at the 2000 Olympics. Harrison, now campaigning in the United States, took the high road when he learned of Bruno's troubles and donated $1,500 to Funds For Frank.

"I wish him a speedy recovery and hope Frank finds sanctuary where he is and that the demons plaguing him are banished," said Harrison. "He needs the support of the whole country right now and it's good to see so much love and support for him from the public."

—Nigel Collins

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



Had British sportswriter Kevin Mitchell reined in his ego and provided a straightforward account of the February 25, 1995, Gerald McClellan-Nigel Benn fight and its tragic aftermath, the result would have been worthier than *War, Baby: The Glamour Of Violence* (Yellow Jersey Press, 184 pages, softcover, £7.00). But instead, Mitchell's theme seems to be that nobody covering or watching boxing today is as sensitive as himself. That must be the reason for his smug denigration of his Yankee counterparts—"The Fight Writers"—as "heroes with notebooks" who "indulge themselves in semi-detached machismo" as their "soft, well-paid fingers move to the beat of [a] fight"; boxing audiences as "drooling and snarling … two-legged dogs seated in the dark"; and, for God's sake, even Hank Kaplan, about whom I never heard a disparaging word until Mitchell's sneering put-down of him as "one of boxing's celebrity gym rats."

Actually meeting and interviewing Kaplan—which Mitchell did not—would surely have yielded a greater understanding of the allure of the ring than that provided by the author of *Fight Club*, the weird non-boxing novel Mitchell finds so revealing.

Too bad, because when he's focused on McClellan-Benn and its strange cast of characters, Mitchell is very readable (except for chapter nine, a two-page imagined monologue by McClellan in his corner after round six, which the battered WBC middleweight titleholder addresses to his dead pit bull, Deuce: "Got to get a solution. Got to, Deuce. Otherwise, dog, you be seein' the G-Man sooner than you think.")

Mitchell's visit with the crippled ex-titlist in McClellan's Freeport, Illinois, home is poignantly rendered, but by then the author's pop psychology and sanctimony have taken their toll.

—Pete Ehrmann

BALLROOM BOXING WEATHERS THE STORM

Just as they did on and after September 11, 2001, members of the boxing community once again came forward to help those in need during a time of crisis. This time, though, it was not due to a man-made disaster, but one initiated by nature's wrath.

On September 18, 2003, Hurricane Isabel devastated several mid-Atlantic states. Baltimore and its suburbs took a major hit. The Inner Harbor, the Maryland city's main tourist area, flooded right up to the front doors of its two pavilions. And knee-high water incapacitated the town's Fells Point section, known for its gentrified townhouses and trendy shops, bars, and restaurants. A staggering 690,000 out of 1.1 million area residents lost power.

Into the fray stepped local promoter Scott Wagner of Ballroom Boxing, one of the most successful regular club shows in the country. Wagner's catering hall, Michael's 8th Avenue (where the fights take place) worked 22-hour days for two weeks in order to serve 15-20 tons of food to the 37,000 linemen, tree cutters, and other crew at two regional service centers that were helping clean up in Isabel's wake. Linemen came in from several states, including as far away as Mississippi, to aid the beleaguered local utility, Baltimore Gas and Electric, which was overwhelmed by the sheer number of citizens without power.

"We've had over 125 employees mobilized from the start," said Wagner. "We fed 3,000 linemen a day at the two regional centers responsible for dispatching the crews. The 15-20 tons were served over a 12-day period."

Gushed Wagner, "I have a newfound respect for the power companies and their crews. These guys are out there putting their lives on the line every day to provide a service that most of us take for granted. These people should be viewed the same way as our policemen and firemen. It's taken for granted that every time we flip a switch, our light should go on, but it's not that simple. Seeing and being with the crews that worked 18 hours a day to restore our power made us proud to serve them. We lost two linemen last week during the restoration; they were electrocuted. It was simply devastating. After watching these guys in action, quite frankly, I can't wait to pay my next electric bill."

[PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL]

Wagner and Dave Wilkerson of Ballroom Boxing unload food for linemen

And the boxing community can't wait to salute Wagner and his staff for making the sport proud, once again.

—Mike Greenhill

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
9-12-03	Heriberto Ruiz W 10 Cristobal Cruz	ESPN2	jf	C+	C-	C
Ruiz too much of everything for outgunned Cruz, whose best punch was a headbutt						
9-13-03	Rocky Juarez KO 1 David Murillo	NBC	jl	B-	C	B-
Who has the record for scoring the most one-punch, left hook knockouts in a single year?						
9-13-03	Juan Lazcano KO 11 Steve Johnston	PPV	l	A	A-	B+
Didn't we all see this coming? Sad beginning of the end for Johnston, a heck of a little fighter						
9-13-03	Miguel Cotto KO 7 Demetrio Ceballos	PPV	jw	B-	D+	C-
Why did Cotto pick this night to get cautious? Ceballos was shot when Don King was only a millionaire						
9-13-03	**Shane Mosley W 12 Oscar De La Hoya**	**PPV**	**World jm**	**A+**	**A+**	**B+**
Going by the look of shock on Mosley's face when he won, you'd have thought he beat Vernon Forrest						
9-16-03	Tokunbo Olajide KO 4 Emil Baku	ESPN2	jm	C+	C	C
Olajide sharp in second fight back after kayo loss; how about a rematch with Epifanio Mendoza?						
9-19-03	Charles Brewer KO 5 Freeman Barr	ESPN2	lh	B-	C-	C
In hindsight, maybe standing in front of Brewer and letting him tee off wasn't the best strategy						
9-20-03	**Chris Byrd W 12 Fres Oquendo**	**HBO**	**IBF h**	**A**	**B**	**D+**
Anyone else think Byrd was more likeable when no one liked him?						
9-26-03	Carlos Maussa KO 6 Jeffrey Resto	ESPN2	jw	C+	A	B-
If you saw Maussa shadowboxing and thought you'd tuned into a Peter Lorre movie, you're not alone						
9-27-03	Juan Carlos Gomez W 10 Sinan Samil Sam	HBO	h	B-	B-	C
In his American television debut, Gomez got the win, but he didn't get anyone's attention						
9-27-03	Dominick Guinn W 10 Duncan Dokiwari	HBO	h	B-	B-	B
Hey, Ronnie Shields, what's with the screaming again? Guinn just isn't a vicious guy; work around it						
9-27-03	Joe Mesi KO 1 DaVarryl Williamson	HBO	h	B-	B+	C+
Note to Wayne Kelly: When a guy is on his back with his eyes closed and his arms in the air, you probably don't need to count						
10-3-03	Monte Barrett KO 10 Eric Kirkland	ESPN2	h	C	B	D+
This gets our vote for ugliest heavyweight fight of the month; even the knockout was awkward						
10-3-03	Daniel Edouard W 10 Miguel Espino	Show	m	C	A-	B+
Late-rounds rally by Edouard the difference in good action fight; Espino let it get away						
10-3-03	Jameel McCline KO 10 Cedric Boswell	Show	h	B-	B	B-
Did McCline say he's the best fighter in the world? He may not be the best fighter in his therapy group						
10-4-03	Cruz Carbajal KO 8 Gerardo Espinoza	PPV	b	B+	B	C+
This should have been stopped way before it was; shame on Robert Byrd and on Espinoza's corner						
10-4-03	Joel Casamayor KO 6 Diego Corrales	PPV	jl	A	A+	A-
Give Casamayor credit for trying to finish Corrales; it almost got him knocked out, but it made a hell of a fight						
10-4-03	James Toney KO 9 Evander Holyfield	PPV	h	A-	B+	B-
Toney has a good shot at landing some high-profile commercial endorsements, don't you think?						
10-4-03	**Rafael Marquez W 12 Mauricio Pastrana**	**PPV**	**IBF b**	**A**	**B+**	**C+**
The secret's out: The Marquez brothers are even better boxers than they are punchers						
10-4-03	Erik Morales KO 3 Guty Espadas	PPV	jl	A	C+	C+
It's going to be loads of fun watching Morales do his thing at 130 pounds						
10-4-03	**Carlos Hernandez Tech. Win 10 Steve Forbes**	**PPV**	**IBF jl**	**A-**	**A-**	**B+**
Will someone explain why Forbes stood inside all night when he didn't have to?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

BILL CAYTON, 1918-2003

Cayton: Pioneer dies at 85

When you add up all of his accomplishments, Bill Cayton, who died of lung cancer in early-October, contributed as much, if not more, to the sport of boxing than any other non-participant of the past 50 years. Known primarily as the co-manager of Mike Tyson, Cayton was also a fight film collector extraordinaire, a pioneer in boxing broadcasting, and a brilliant dealmaker.

A native New Yorker, Cayton earned a degree in chemical engineering, began his career as a technical writer for DuPont, and by 1945 was running his own advertising agency. In '48, the manufacturers of Vaseline Hair Tonic were looking for new ways to advertise their product on television. Cayton, who understood how well-suited boxing was to the small-box format, produced a pilot featuring the Jack Dempsey-Jess Willard fight, and the sponsor loved it. That was the beginning of *The Greatest Fights Of The Century*, a TV show that ran in the U.S. for about 15 years. In the mid-'60s, Cayton produced a theatrical release entitled *The Legendary Champions* that was nominated for an Academy Award.

All of the above was made possible by Cayton's vast collection of fight films, which eventually become the largest of its kind in the world. Cayton was also responsible for preserving more than 95 percent of the existing fight film from the era of nitrate film, which disintegrates over time, by transferring them to safe negatives.

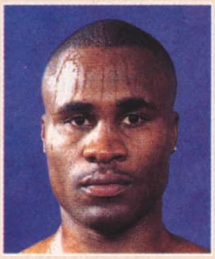
In '61, Cayton hired Jim Jacobs, and together they became one of the most successful managerial teams of all-time. Besides Tyson, they also guided the careers of Wilfred Benitez and Edwin Rosario. After Jacobs' death in '88, Cayton managed Tommy Morrison, Vinny Paz, Jeremy Williams, and Michael Grant. Significantly, none of the fighters fared as well after they left Cayton as they did under his management.

Cayton sold his film and tape library to Disney Corp. in '98 for approximately $100-million. Today, they are featured on ESPN Classic. Cayton also came up with the concept of having studio hosts in addition to the ringside commentators on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, which was a first for boxing.

"To Bill, the most important thing he did was not the film collection," said Steve Lott, who worked for Cayton from '73 until his death. "What was important to Bill was that the deals he made for his fighters were 100 percent in the fighters' favor. When it came to managing, Bill's decision making was impeccable."

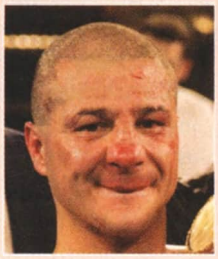
—Nigel Collins

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Page: Gets 11 years for robbery

No charges had been brought yet as we went to press, but flyweight titlist **Eric Morel** was in potential trouble in late-September, facing investigation, along with two other men, in connection with a possible sexual assault of a 15-year-old girl in Madison, Wisconsin, in November '02. Police officers obtained a DNA sample from Morel, but Morel insisted his DNA would not be found on the girl, and as of press time, no arrests had been made ... Morel's promoter, **Bob Arum**, escaped trouble in early-October, when the Nevada State Athletic Commission let him off the hook despite his harsh accusations in the wake of the **Shane Mosley-Oscar De La Hoya** decision. Arum apologized for his comments, and the NSAC promptly excused him from a commission hearing ... Former welterweight beltholder **James Page** did not escape trouble by any means, as he was sentenced in early-September to 11 years in federal prison for bank robbery. Page, 32, pled guilty to robbing three Georgia banks in December '01 ... As expected, **Mike Tyson** formally pled not guilty in late-September in connection with his June altercation with three civilians at a Brooklyn hotel. The case is scheduled to proceed to court in December ... Hall of Fame trainer **George Benton** was arrested in mid-September for failure to pay child support. According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Benton, 70, owed $216,919 for a teenage daughter in Arizona ... In late-September, New York judge **Denny Chin** upheld a jury's decision that middleweight champion **Bernard Hopkins** libeled ex-manager **Lou DiBella**, denying Hopkins' request for a new trial. Judge Chin then twisted the knife by ruling that "The Executioner" must pay nine percent interest on the $610,000 that the jury awarded DiBella ... **Johnny Tapia's** "vida loca" is going to be the subject of a major motion picture. The two-division former titlist signed a contract with producer **Jerry Bruckheimer** in late-September to begin work on a film about his life, with a 2005 release date projected ... Milwaukee, Wisconsin, welterweight contender **Jimmy Sherrer**, who fought from 1944-'51, died in September at age 79. Sherrer's career was a miracle from the time it started, since he spent most of his childhood in a wheelchair with a spinal condition. But he eventually walked, and he eventually fought, compiling a pro record of 46-19-3 (21) and beating the likes of **Izzy Jannazzo** and the **Cocoa Kid** ... Philadelphia-area trainer **Jimmy Green** died in late-September at the age of 60 due to complications from triple-bypass surgery. Green was working with undefeated junior welterweight prospect **Demetrius Hopkins** at the time of his death ... The WBC had a busy month, making one move that should definitely be applauded, and one for which time will just have to tell. In late-September, the Mexico-based organization performed a wonderful act of charity, arranging for the donation of medicine and treatment for former featherweight contender **Juan Antonio Lopez**, who is fighting leukemia. Both the WBC and Novarties Laboratory are making monthly payments to cover Lopez' medical expenses. Also, in early-October, the WBC decided at their convention in Moscow to raise the cruiserweight class limit from 190 pounds to 200. The next day, the WBA announced that it, too, was changing the division limit to 200 pounds.



Tapia: Life story to hit silver screen

THE PUNCHLINES

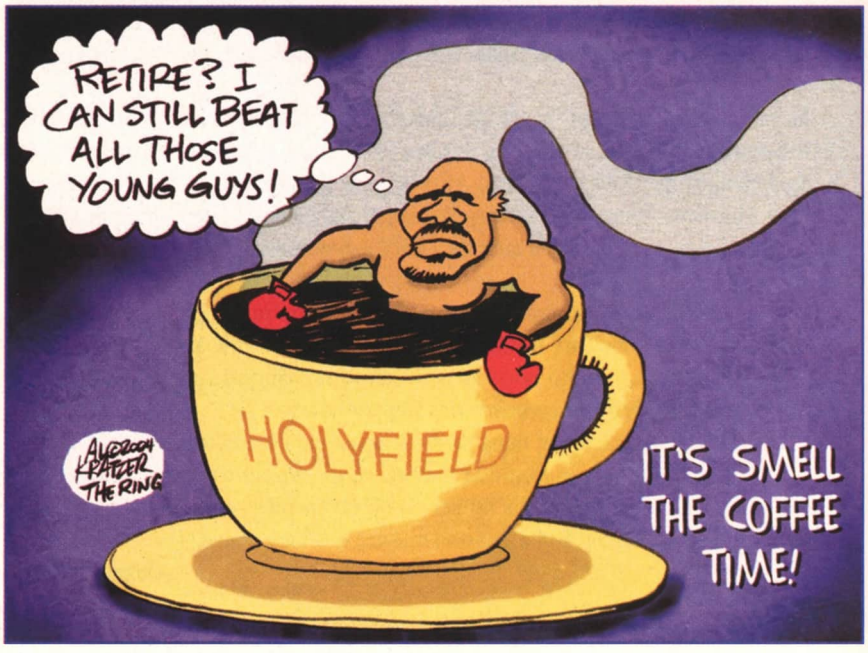
"I am the Ebola virus. It's like I have leprosy. Can't go near me because they think they'll catch it."

—Chris Byrd, on the reluctance of many heavyweights to fight him

"We do have the waterboy job available, so he could be the Bobby Boucher of Team Rahman."

—Hasim Rahman, making reference to Adam Sandler's character in *The Waterboy*, contemplating the hiring of former David Tua trainer Kevin Barry

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Heavyweight/Light Heavyweight
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
6. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
7. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
8. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
9. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Welterweight
10. **JAMES TONEY**
    Heavyweight/Cruiserweight

(For period ended October 7, 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: James Toney (unranked at heavyweight last issue) crashes the ratings at number five following his stunning knockout of Evander Holyfield (fifth last issue). Holyfield exits. Fres Oquendo returns at the ninth spot thanks to his strong showing against top-rated Chris Byrd. Oquendo's reentry causes a reshuffling, with Wladimir Klitschko (ninth last issue) moving up to eighth and the inactive Mike Tyson (eighth last issue) slipping down to 10. John Ruiz (10th last issue) is gone.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Inactivity and plans to move up in weight have cost Diobelys Hurtado (seventh last issue) his ranking. His departure advances Ricky Hatton (eighth last issue), Omar Weis (ninth last issue), and Miguel Cotto (10th last issue) one position each. Streaking Junior Witter debuts as number 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Aldo Rios (10th last issue) is gone following his kayo loss to Ricky Hatton at junior welter. Victoriano Sosa takes his place.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: All kinds of changes at 130 pounds: Carlos Hernandez jumps from eighth to fifth thanks to his victory over Steve Forbes, who falls from sixth to eighth. Diego Corrales (fifth last issue) slips to seventh due to his TKO loss to second-rated Joel Casamayor. Erik Morales enters at number six after moving up from the featherweight division and stopping Guty Espadas. Morales' arrival and Hernandez' advancement shoves Yodsanan Nanthachai (seventh last issue) and Cassius Baloyi (ninth last issue) down to ninth and 10th, respectively. This pushes out Jorge Barrios (10th last issue), but he could be back soon as Baloyi is dangerously close to being inactive for more than a year.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Erik Morales (first last issue) is now campaigning at 130, and is replaced at the top by Juan Manuel Marquez (second last issue). In turn, everybody rated below Marquez last issue moves up one spot each as well, making room for Zahir Raheem to enter at number 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Cruz Carbajal (fifth last issue) trades places with relatively inactive Johnny Bredahl (fourth last issue), following Carbajal's kayo of Gerardo Espinoza.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: Hawk Makepula (fifth last issue) departs after being stopped by fourth-ranked Mzukisi Sikali. Also gone is Damaen Kelly (ninth last issue), who was knocked out by third-ranked Irene Pacheco. Their exits allow the fighters rated below them last issue to advance. Newcomers Alexander Mahmutov and Vic Darchinyan are now ninth and 10th, respectively.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Daniel Reyes (ninth last issue) rockets to number three by knocking out Edgar Cardenas, who held that position last issue. Cardenas assumes Reyes' former spot at number nine.

POUND-FOR-POUND: James Toney is back after an 8½-year absence, replacing Vernon Forrest at the 10th spot. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended October 7, 2003

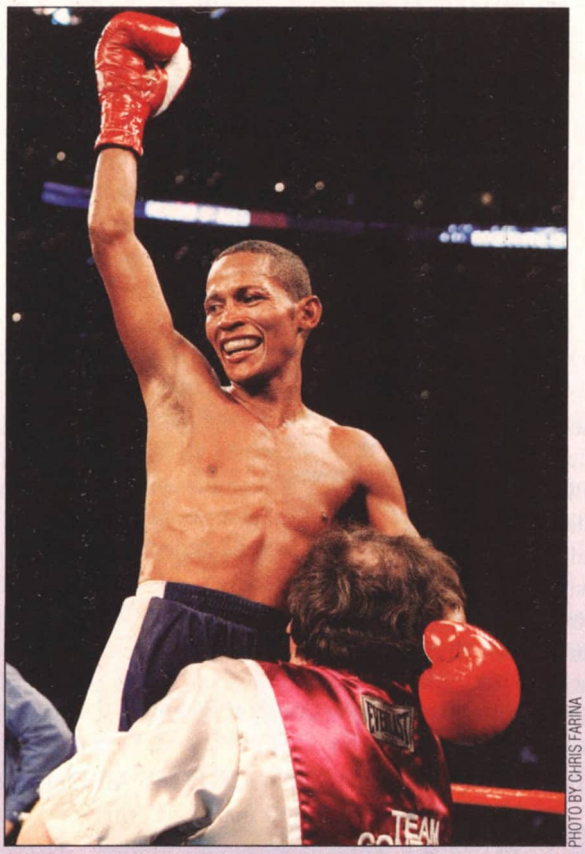


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Daniel Reyes soared up six spots at strawweight by stopping Edgar Cardenas

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 41-2-1 (32)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 37-2 (20)
2. **CORRIE SANDERS**
South Africa 39-2 (29)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)
4. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 32-2 (31)
5. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
6. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 42-3-1 (37)
7. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-4-1 (29)
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 41-2 (38)
9. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 24-2 (15)
10. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 50-4 (44)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: SHANE MOSLEY
Pomona, CA 39-2 (35)

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 36-3 (29)
2. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 45-3 (25)
3. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 23-2 (21)
4. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 56-5 (38)
5. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 27-2-1 (20)
6. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 18-1-1 (12)
7. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 36-9-1 (18)
8. **J.C. CANDELO**
Colombia 27-5-3 (19)
9. **ALEX GARCIA**
Mexico 22-0 (21)
10. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 46-5 (30)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Mexico 57-3 (40)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 41-2 (33)
2. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-5-1 (24)
3. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 62-13 (28)
4. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 19-2-1 (9)
5. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 53-3-2 (28)
6. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 34-2-1 (22)
7. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 23-4-1 (12)
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 34-1 (22)
9. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 18-0 (14)
10. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Tulsa, OK 24-0 (14)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-2 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 37-2-1 (28)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 49-3-1 (34)
3. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 23-2-2 (14)
4. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 22-2-1 (12)
5. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 35-3 (26)
6. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 41-4-1 (21)
7. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 29-1-1 (13)
8. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 20-0 (16)
9. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-2-3 (15)
10. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 34-1-1 (18)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 30-3 (27)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 41-1-2 (29)
3. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 25-1-1 (22)
4. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 24-11-1 (20)
5. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 53-2 (26)
6. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-3-3 (14)
7. **PETE FRISSINA**
Tarpon Springs, FL 27-3-1 (15)
8. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 14-0 (13)
9. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 29-4 (17)
10. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 28-2-2 (13)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JAMES TONEY**
   Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 32-1 (28)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 29-2 (21)
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 19-0 (16)
5. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 42-12-2 (28)
6. **GUILLERMO JONES**
   Panama 29-2-2 (22)
7. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 21-1-1 (20)
8. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 26-5 (24)
9. **SEBASTIAN ROTHMAN**
   South Africa 17-1-2 (12)
10. **VIRGIL HILL**
    Bismarck, ND 49-4 (23)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 21-1 (17)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-0 (38)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 39-9-1 (27)
4. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadelphia, PA 21-3-1 (7)
5. **MEHDI SAHNOUNE**
   France 24-0 (21)
6. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 34-1 (22)
7. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 44-4 (29)
8. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-2 (21)
9. **RICHARD HALL**
   Winter Haven, FL 26-4 (25)
10. **GEORGE JONES**
    Paterson, NJ 19-2 (13)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 36-0 (29)
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 32-0 (6)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 19-1 (14)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-5-1 (26)
5. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 36-5-3 (13)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-3-1 (18)
7. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 28-1 (11)
8. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 40-9 (28)
9. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
10. **SYD VANDERPOOL**
    Canada 34-2 (23)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 42-2-1 (31)

1. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-2-1 (25)
2. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 38-1 (35)
3. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 35-4 (26)
4. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 30-3 (19)
5. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 18-3 (13)
6. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AK 17-0 (12)
7. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO 48-4-1 (30)
8. **EVANS OURE ASHIRA**
   Denmark 23-0 (13)
9. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 19-0 (9)
10. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
    Canada 18-1 (10)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: RICARDO MAYORGA
Nicaragua 25-3-1 (22)

1. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 28-3 (19)
3. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 31-2 (11)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 32-0 (25)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 39-2 (25)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 23-10 (18)
7. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 22-2-1 (20)
8. **TEDDY REID**
   Adelphi, MD 22-5-1 (16)
9. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 22-1-1 (13)
10. **JOSE RIVERA**
    Worcester, MA 37-3-1 (24)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 52-3 (30)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 29-1 (21)
3. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 36-6 (28)
4. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 23-1-1 (16)
5. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-2-1 (16)
6. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 33-1 (10)
7. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 33-0 (25)
8. **OMAR WEIS**
   Los Angeles, CA 36-4-3 (16)
9. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 17-0 (14)
10. **JUNIOR WITTER**
    England 27-1-2 (16)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 30-0 (20)

1. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-2-1 (25)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 47-6-1 (43)
3. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 21-0-1 (7)
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
5. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-0 (22)
6. **COURTNEY BURTON**
   Benton Harbor, MI 19-1(11)
7. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 49-5-1 (33)
8. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-3-2 (41)
9. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 46-10-2 (33)
10. **VICTORIANO SOSA**
    Dominican Republic 35-3-2 (26)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 34-0 (31)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 30-1 (19)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-2 (28)
4. **PHILLIP NDOU**
   South Africa 31-1 (30)
5. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 40-3-1 (24)
6. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 45-1 (34)
7. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 37-2 (31)
8. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 23-2 (6)
9. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 39-2-1 (32)
10. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
    South Africa 28-1 (16)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 29-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 24-0 (23)
3. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 42-3 (27)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 21-1 (14)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 26-1-1 (20)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 24-1 (15)
7. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-4-1 (11)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 30-4-1 (20)
9. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 38-0 (28)
10. **OSCAR ANDRADE**
    Mexico 30-22-1 (17)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 33-0 (18)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 47-2 (25)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 28-0 (21)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 28-4-2 (17)
5. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 14-1-2 (10)
6. **PETER CULSHAW**
   England 23-1-1 (12)
7. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 14-0-2 (8)
8. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 21-0 (17)
9. **ALEXANDER MAHMUTOV**
   Russia 42-6 (21)
10. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
    Australia 19-0 (14)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-1 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 34-3-1 (25)
2. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 28-2 (23)
3. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 27-2 (12)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
5. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 25-2 (14)
6. **MELCHOR COB-CASTRO**
   Mexico 66-9-4 (30)
7. **MHIKIZA MYEKENI**
   South Africa 17-1 (6)
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-2 (21)
9. **JOSE VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 36-13-2 (21)
10. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
    Thailand 50-3-2 (20)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 30-1-1 (19)
2. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-2-1 (10)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 29-1-1 (24)
4. **YUTAKA NIDA**
   Japan 14-1-3 (7)
5. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 49-2-2 (17)
6. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 23-10 (6)
7. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 32-7-2 (22)
8. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 22-2-1 (19)
9. **EDGAR CARDENAS**
   Mexico 30-10-2 (16)
10. **IVAN CALDERON**
    Puerto Rico 17-0 (3)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

REDEFINING DE LA HOYA

Duane Ford, the only judge who marked his scorecard for Marvin Hagler when Marvelous tried to lift Vito Antuofermo's middleweight title in Las Vegas in 1979, once revealed that he had actually regurgitated after the decision was announced as a draw. Well, then Ford can understand how some of us felt after learning that he and his colleagues, Stanley Christodoulou and Anek Hongtongkam, had awarded Shane Mosley a unanimous decision over Oscar De La Hoya in their rematch. My stomach resembled that of a bulimic who'd eaten spoiled tuna fish and watched a snuff film before getting tossed around in a small boat on the high seas during Hurricane Isabel.

On my card, De La Hoya was the victor by a 116-113 count (or 7-4-1 in rounds). Hey, don't tell me about those writers who had Mosley ahead at the final bell and are talking about him landing the harder punches. Did you hear Papa Mosley in the corner before the 12th round? Did you see the look on the face of Sugar Shane while he awaited the announcement of the decision? Hell, even *they* knew De La Hoya had won.

Of course, because De La Hoya sets such high standards, creates such great expectations, and is one of the game's few true megastars, he doesn't get to simply walk away from September 13 playing the role of innocent victim who had his pocket picked. No, with a performance that was disappointing in its own way, "The Golden Boy" has left himself open for one more shot in the ribs—this one from me.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ryan thinks De La Hoya did enough to get the nod

My complaint with De La Hoya is that he has added yet another 36-minute, nip-and-tuck struggle to his career highlight reel, a retrospective that features more disputed decisions than a season's worth of *Judge Judy* episodes. The closeness of the bout doesn't make me question whether or not he won. But it is, for the first time, making me question whether or not De La Hoya belongs on the list of the greatest fighters who ever resided in that exclusive neighborhood of 135 to 154 pounds.

De La Hoya was my pick going into the rematch because I believed that he was better accustomed to fighting at 154 pounds and, more importantly, was one of the chosen ones, a once-in-a-blue-moon fighter who had an aura about him and would find a way to do something spectacular on the most important night of his career. He was, in other words, one of "them," the immortals who pry victory from the clutches of defeat or confound experts or convincingly avenge setbacks or paint some picture, play some tune, or cook up some delicacy we've never seen, heard, or tasted before.

And yes, you know who the "them" are between 135 and 154 pounds: Roberto Duran, Thomas Hearns, Sugar Ray Leonard, Wilfred Benitez, and Aaron Pryor.

What makes the return bout with Mosley so disappointing is that De La Hoya was overdue to come up big, *really* big, against an upper echelon opponent. Sure, he'll always be able to blast out a smaller Arturo Gatti or a worn-out Yory Boy Campas (maybe simultaneously), and De La Hoya's collection of alphabet belts at various weights has guaranteed his enshrinement in Canastota. But The Golden Boy hasn't bowled over anyone in his must-see outings and, consequently, might not bowl over the historians the way he and his promoter, Bob Arum, think and hope that he will.

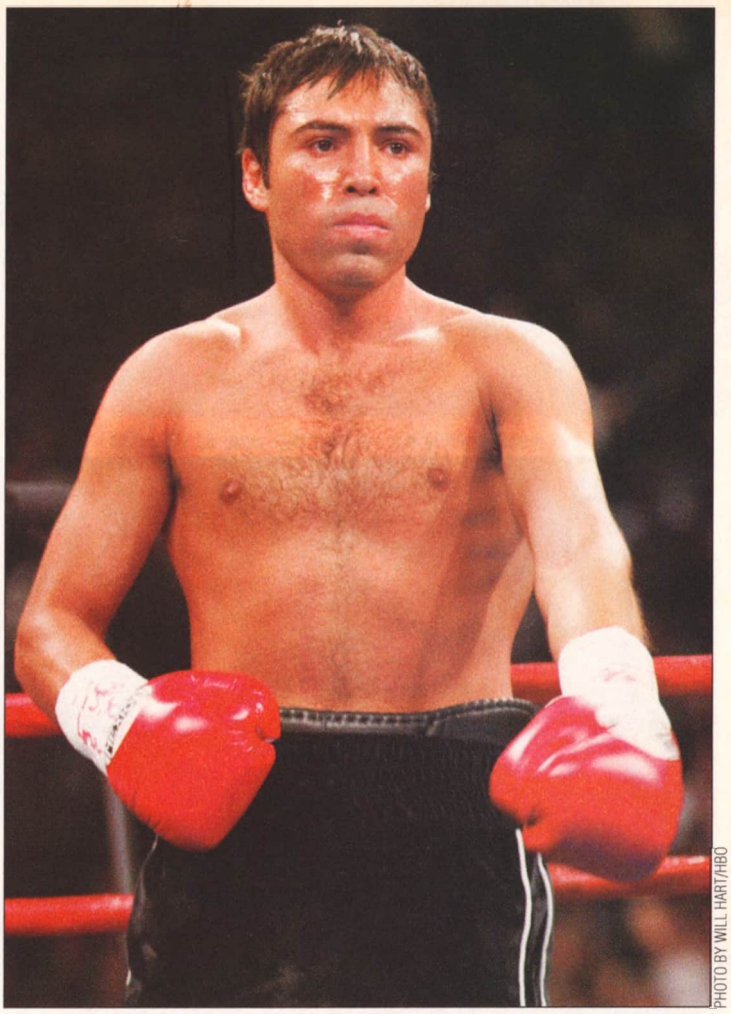


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Oscar's legacy is still in the balance

Let's look at the superfights, or near-superfights. Julio Cesar Chavez: Nice performance in a one-sided bloodbath. Pernell Whitaker: No matter what the scorecards said, De La Hoya lost that one. Ike Quartey: Our hero climbed off the canvas in round six, showed a champion's mettle by flooring Quartey in the 12th, and won on points, but not decisively. Felix Trinidad: De La Hoya got screwed, but lost sympathy by galloping like Secretariat in the final three rounds. Mosley I: Clear-cut De La Hoya defeat. Fernando Vargas: Wild triumph in ugly grudge match. Mosley II: The Golden Boy wins in some eyes, loses in some, and impresses in none.

This isn't the way the careers of the aforementioned legends unfolded. After Duran was outpointed by *his* Mosley, Puerto Rican Esteban DeJesus, "Hands Of Stone" knocked his rival stiffer than a Chicago windsock in the rematch. (And the rubber match, too.) Sugar Ray Leonard rebounded from the Duran defeat by making the Panamanian bad ass uncharacteristically quit. Hearns got a second crack at conqueror Leonard and floored him twice before settling for an unpopular draw. On Pryor's biggest night, he halted a ring god, Alexis Arguello. And Benitez won his first world title at 17. Legends. Immortals. Mythic figures. Special guys who did special things.

Forget for a second what Arum, the HBO industrial complex, and this magazine have told you in the past and ask yourself this question: Does De La Hoya *really* deserve to suit up in the same dressing room with those other guys? The answer, in light of the Mosley sequel, is no. Leonard wouldn't have run against Trinidad. Duran wouldn't have struggled so much with a Whitaker who couldn't hurt him. If Hearns put Quartey down, the African would have stayed down. And none of the Hall of Famers would have fallen to Mosley.

There's suddenly a sense of urgency for De La Hoya, who keeps insisting retirement isn't around the corner, but just down the block a wee bit. The former Olympic gold medalist, All-Mexican-American Boy, and teen idol is going to have to do something sensational in order to get his name returned to the historians' Christmas card lists. The feeling here is that it would have to be something on the order of upsetting middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins. Or, at the very least, knocking out Mosley in Act III.

De La Hoya was supposed to be the Latino Leonard, but hasn't yet delivered. He's been brilliant when the big-fight opponent has cooperated, but surprisingly unable to adapt on several occasions when things have gone wrong. And so it's another big fight and another medium performance to go along with it.

You know, the most unsettling thought for those of us who followed De La Hoya even before he won the gold in Barcelona in 1992 isn't that he didn't deliver a career-defining performance in Las Vegas on September 13, but that maybe he did. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

At the MGM Grand in Las Vegas for the Shane Mosley-Oscar De La Hoya rematch, you didn't have to bet on the fight to bet on the fight. At these specially designed blackjack tables, the major difference between the players and the pictured fighters was that Oscar and Shane never had to say, "Hit me."

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Shortly before he would go into the ring to check Evander Holyfield's beard, James Toney checked the beard of Don Turner, Holyfield's trainer. Turner found amusement in his confrontation with "Lights Out," but he found nothing amusing about what happened on October 4 between Holyfield and Toney.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Baby Joe and Big Joe: Some may say that Joe Mesi is on the small side for a modern heavyweight, but the same cannot be said of the enormous blowup of the Buffalo sensation that stood some 60 feet tall in the HSBC Arena on September 27. Just imagine how quickly the 60-foot version would have kayoed DaVarryl Williamson ...

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Did you hear the one about the promoter who let potential cash cow Baby Joe Mesi get away and signed boring ex-cruiserweight Juan Carlos Gomez instead? Sugar Ray Leonard and business partner Bjorn Rebney are having a good laugh about something, but it's probably not that.

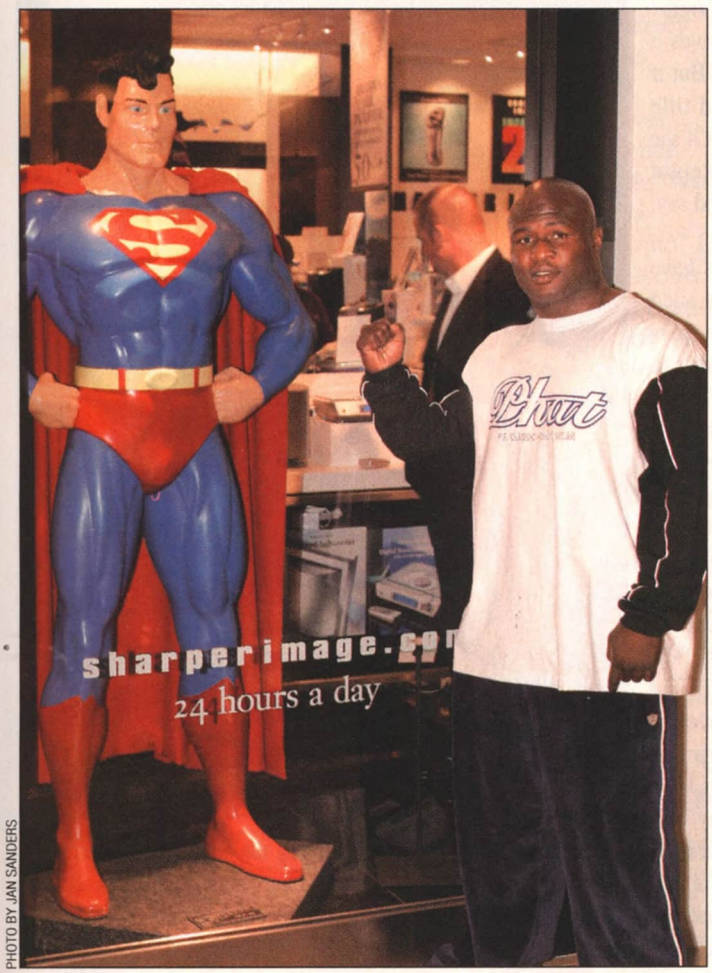


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

There's a serious disparity in abdominal muscle definition, but otherwise, James Toney bore a strong resemblance to Superman in his October fight with Evander Holyfield. And something tells us even the Man of Steel's abs would have trouble holding up under Toney's body assault.

PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

Oscar De La Hoya didn't get the win in his rematch with Shane Mosley, but at least he got a free cake out of it. No word yet on whether, like his "bad oyster" experience before the first fight with Mosley, De La Hoya is claiming a bad piece of cake affected his performance.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

At age 45, miracle man George Foreman won the world heavyweight title, and at 54, he can still pull off minor miracles, like reeling in babes half his age. Those are round-card girls Grace and Rosanna posing with Big George at the HBO televised Chris Byrd-Fres Oquendo card at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Finding belts was never a problem for middleweight champ Carlos Monzon or light heavy titlist Victor Galindez, but scoring the right necklace was another story. The two Argentine fighting legends are pictured here on a shopping trip in Turin, Italy, in 1977.

NEW FACES

ISHE SMITH

Welterweight

By Joe Santoliquito

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

She was the center of his world, and he was the center of hers. That's the way it should be with family, right? Especially when it involves a mother and her only son. But if Ishe Smith wins a world title someday, it's unlikely you'll see the 25-year-old welterweight turn to the TV cameras and say, "Hi, Mom."

Many fighters' careers have been retarded or even derailed by ugly fighter-manager spats that leave the boxer refusing to work for months or years, waiting out his contract. But Smith's ordeal has an added level of ugliness to it. His manager just happened to be his mother, Jacqueline.

Somehow, he survived their nightmarish quarrel without the help of Sigmund Freud. In fact, the 5'10" Las Vegas-based fighter has turned the wedge that's come between them into the fuel that's propelled him. Smith has fought his way to a spotless 13-0 (7) record despite a having to sue his own mother to get out of their contract.

It was messy, emotionally draining, and created the kind of gut-wrenching hardship that left Smith occasionally debating whether or not he should even continue fighting. Through time, Smith has been able to laugh about many of the things that occurred, healing bad memories. Plus he's been helped by the stability provided by his wife, Latoya, and her family. And he's secure in knowing he still provides a fine example to his son, Ishe Jr.

But the cost has been huge. Smith has severed all ties to the only blood relatives he's known, his mother and sister. Smith never knew

(Continued on page 63)

PRO RECORD

2000		
July 29	Jose Santos Meraz, Saint Joseph, MS	KO 3
Sept. 9	Steve Verdin, New Orleans, LA	KO 1
2001		
May 18	Tony Sanva, Las Vegas	KO 1
June 15	Alfonso Gomez, Las Vegas	W 4
Oct. 19	Sean Holley, Las Vegas	KO 3
Dec. 28	Norberto Bravo, Las Vegas	W 6
2002		
May 17	Michael Soberanis, Las Vegas	W 4
July 26	Charles Blake, Las Vegas	KO 2
Oct. 18	Jerry Balagbagan, Las Vegas	W 6
Dec. 27	Edson Madrid, Las Vegas	KO 1
2003		
April 24	Sam Garr, Gulfport, MS	W 10
June 20	Sal Lopez, Dominguez Hills, CA	KO 2
July 31	David Estrada, Sault St. Marie, MI	W 10

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
13	13	0	0	7

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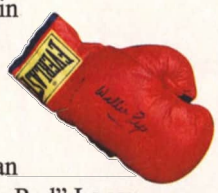
★ Ken Buchanan
★ Danny "Little Red" Lopez
★ Angel Manfredy
★ Terry Norris
★ Jeff Fenech
★ Pipino Cuevas
★ Nino Benvenuti
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Paulie Ayala
★ Ricardo "Finito" Lopez
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Livingstone Bramble
★ Donald Curry
★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee



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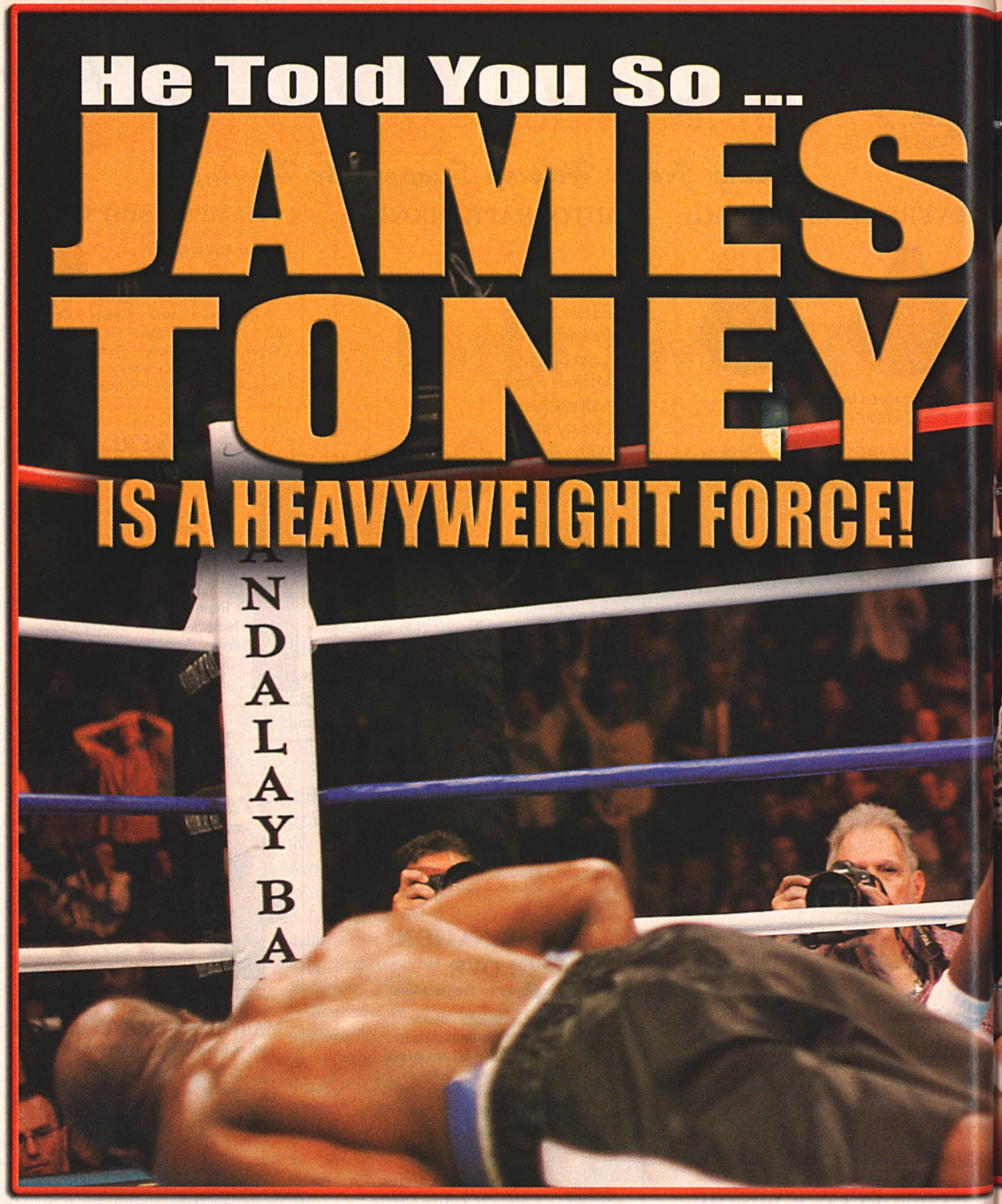

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Although the final punch of the fight was a left to the body, Toney repeatedly drilled Holyfield with flush right hands throughout the fight. "Lights Out" is not a one-punch knockout artist at heavyweight, but his blows inflicted enough accumulative damage to stop one of the greatest heavyweights of all-time.

By Ivan Goldman

For years James "Lights Out" Toney had been saying he's a natural heavyweight. "But nobody ever believed me," he complained. They do now.

By stopping the legendary Evander Holyfield in the ninth round and taking him to school along the way, Toney proved himself a bona fide heavyweight force. Although this was a faded, 40-year-old version of Holyfield, he was still a crafty, dangerous opponent with one of the mightiest hearts in boxing.

Toney, a witty, angry, tough mumbler out of Michigan, is a street character whose off-center but likable persona ought to go down well with yet another generation of fans. Meanwhile, the Las Vegas crowd, as usual, was on Holyfield's side, even as last-minute money poured in on Toney, making him a slight favorite.

Toney, a boxer with remarkable finesse, creates just the right angles and makes just the right moves to put an opponent off his stride and set him up for punishment. "Remember," he said, "I was born to fight. Everybody else was taught."

Toney started slowly, giving away round one, then did a little more in round two, but mostly just stayed in a defensive posture and watched. Then he ratcheted it up, beating Holyfield to the punch both inside and at a distance, slipping, sliding, and bobbing away from punches without running. He had a creative arsenal of combinations, hitting upstairs and down. He dominated rounds four through eight, winning them on all three judges' cards before he finished the job in round nine.

IBF cruiserweight titleholder Toney, though standing only 5'10", looks, sounds, acts, and fights like a man who's at home with the big guys. Ironically, even as he dealt "The Real Deal" a losing hand, Toney's biggest admirer may have been

Holyfield himself. It was clear there were two Holyfields in that ring—the dangerous warrior trying to knock Toney's head off (as in that beer commercial) and the dedicated boxing fan, who immensely appreciated Toney's deft moves against him.

Holyfield may not be a complete gentleman when he accidentally on purpose tries to headbutt another fighter, but after the fight he gave more detailed, gentlemanly praise to his opponent than you are ever likely to see.

Because of Toney's skilled execution, "I found myself thinking more than fighting," Holyfield explained. He noted that Toney did not have a huge punch, but he said it within the context of a compliment. If Toney hit harder, he said, "he hit me so many times, I'd be torn apart. He stood in front of me. I thought it was impossible for a person to be right there and get away with it. But he did what he said he was going to do. The bodyshots made him a complete fighter. He fought the complete fight."

Holyfield said he hadn't been hit so frequently since he fought Dwight Muhammad Qawi in their first match back in 1986. Toney's pal and rising star trainer Freddie Roach gave his pupil an A+. "He beat a legend," Roach said.

With Toney's fairy-tale comeback at full steam, he's just in time to inject real pizzazz into a mostly lackluster heavyweight division. His latest victory might even set up a rematch with the great Roy Jones, nine years and more than 40 pounds later. "There's no greater attraction out there today," contended Dan Goossen, Toney's promoter.

Toney held titles at middleweight and super middleweight before lifting a cruiserweight belt from the previously unbeaten Vassiliy Jirov in April. He always maintained that he lost to Jones—who's rated number one pound-for-pound by this magazine—because he could no longer compete down at 168 pounds. Were they to go at it again, this time as heavyweights, they could test that hypothesis.

After shaking up the heavyweight picture with his decisive win over John Ruiz, Jones was leaning toward returning to the light heavyweight division to defend the championship against Antonio Tarver. But that fight was running into contractual disagreements, as do so many of Jones' fights. Toney's decisive entry into the heavyweight division could add just the right spice to send Jones right back up again.

Other potentially lucrative matches for Toney could be against David Tua, Mike Tyson, Fres Oquendo, or even giant heavyweights such as Corrie Sanders and a Klitschko brother or two. Chris Byrd has never been a big draw, but as two Michigan natives, he and Toney might attract a crowd in the Detroit area.

When Toney isn't talking up his own talent as a fighter, he's often complimenting the showbiz and deal-making talents of Goossen, whose troubled career made for a side-by-side comeback with his fighter. But it wasn't publicity, money, or politics that put Toney back on top. It was talent, determination, and guts.

Toney, a fleshy 217, was so comfortable in the ring, several times he turned away from Holyfield, 219, to carry on a carefree conversation with someone sitting ringside. As much as any fighter out there today, Lights Out is at home inside the ropes. Clearly having fun, he behaved as though it was just another night in the gym.

Toney's usual, prefight trash talk never reached critical mass against Holyfield. Toney admired him too much for that. Besides, when did words ever put Holyfield off his game? Afterward, Toney said "any other heavyweight would have been out after four or five rounds of that."

The intriguing match, a Showtime pay-per-view attraction, drew 7,897 fans into the Mandalay Bay Arena. Goossen figured the gate was a respectable $2.5-million. But all the numbers would have been higher had rival Bob Arum not gone toe-to-toe with a competing show on the same night. In Arum's main attraction in Los Angeles' Staples Center, Erik Morales kayoed Guty Espadas in round three.

A significant percentage of fans that show up for big Las Vegas cards cross the desert from California. Clearly some of them stayed on the coast to attend Arum's show or watch it on TV. *The Los Angeles Times*, which usually allocates little space for boxing, gave good play to the Arum

Old-school pro Toney sneaks a hard left hook past Holyfield's guard. It is Toney's marvelous technique, as much his guts and determination, that have carried the Michigan trash-talker back to the top after years of languishing in boxing's backwater.

Holyfield was amazed at Toney's ability to stand right in front of him and make "The Real Deal" miss again and again. "I missed him so bad, I was starting to get embarrassed," said the 40-year-old Holyfield, who was highly complimentary of his conqueror.

show, which was in a downtown area the *Times* wants to build up.

Arum's competing card "hurt the industry more than it hurt us," Goossen said. "That's never been done in boxing—two pay-per-view shows the same night. It's not right for the fans." Goossen said he expects to compete with other sports, "but not with other boxing attractions."

Arum's scheme was obvious—corner the night's lucrative Latino market. Goossen, using a counterpunching promotional strategy, presented Diego Corrales vs. Joel Casamayor in a compelling junior lightweight co-feature. It lived up to its billing. Both fighters hit the canvas before ring physician Margaret Goodman told referee Tony Weeks to stop it after six rounds because of a badly cut mouth suffered by Corrales. It automatically gave Casamayor the victory. A punch had jammed Corrales' mouthpiece through his skin, creating a blood fountain. It was that kind of night.

Referee Jay Nady warned Holyfield at least six times to stop coming in with his head, but he never deducted a point. Asked about Holyfield's tactics later, Toney laughed them off. "I like the physical stuff," he said. "I ain't no crybaby."

Over the years, Holyfield began using his head as a third fist. Opponent after opponent complained about it. Before the fight, Toney said if Holyfield got too rambunctious with his skull, he would hit him low. But Toney's clean punching did so much damage, he apparently felt no need to retaliate with fouls of his own.

Holyfield, who celebrated his 41st birthday 15 days after the fight, has scored only two victories in his last eight outings. One was an eighth-round technical decision win over Hasim Rahman after what was ruled an unintentional headbutt created a historically grotesque swelling on Rahman's forehead.

Once again, Holyfield, 38-7-2 (25), had to field questions about just when he will put a halt to a pro career that began in 1984 and is beginning to resemble a shaggy dog story. Although he said he's definitely taking more fights, later he qualified the remark. "I'm going to consider," he said. "I'm going to pray and give it some serious thought. I don't want this to happen again."

Holyfield had been stopped only once before, by Riddick Bowe in round eight of their third fight, in 1995. This time Holyfield's trainer, Don Turner, warned him after the eighth round that if he couldn't turn the fight around fast, Turner would stop it. Holyfield went back out to try again, and Toney put him on the canvas with a bodyshot.

"I love him too much to see him hurt,"

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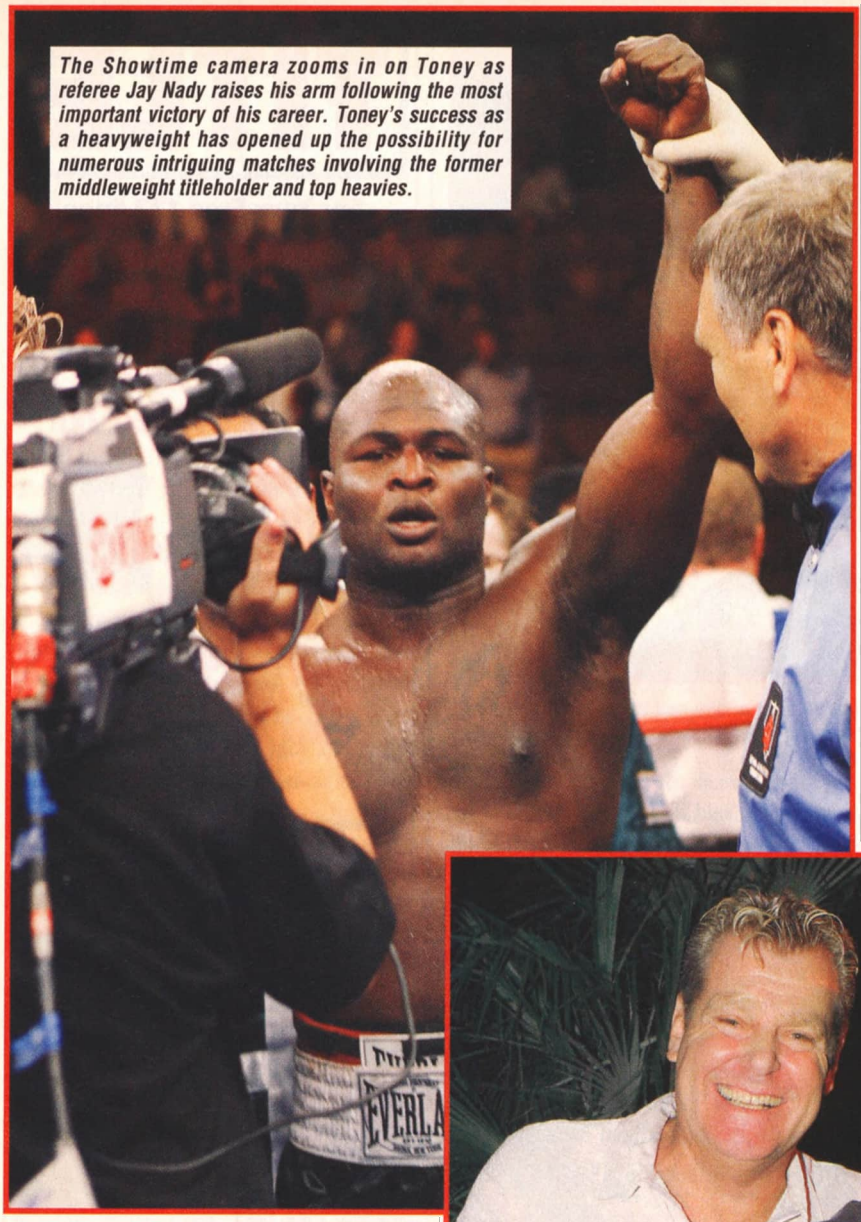

The Showtime camera zooms in on Toney as referee Jay Nady raises his arm following the most important victory of his career. Toney's success as a heavyweight has opened up the possibility for numerous intriguing matches involving the former middleweight titleholder and top heavies.

Turner said. "Just before Toney knocked him down, I made my decision to stop the fight."

Holyfield said he was shocked that Toney "had me missing so badly. He got down so low, when I missed him, I missed him so bad, I was starting to get embarrassed." Toney, Holyfield added, would duck, take a couple of steps, and come back at him.

"I figured I would wait for him to get arrogant, to get me hurt, then go for him," he said. "At the time he did hurt me, my corner stopped it. And I was thinking, *this is my chance*." But Holyfield said he had no complaints about Turner's decision and no excuses.

The comeback by Toney, 67-4-2 (43), was remarkable. Although in the early-'90s he was one of the most highly regarded fighters in any weight class, his loss to Jones seemed to stop his career in its tracks. He had managerial and promotional problems, and although he kept winning most of his fights, he gradually dropped off the map.

He no longer trained diligently, and at one time he was up to 275 pounds. Only two years before vanquishing Holyfield, he was a fat has-been fighting on a little off-TV club card in Compton, California.

But meanwhile his personal life had improved appreciably when he met and eventually married his present wife, Anjanette. He signed with Goossen-Tutor Promotions, began training with the crafty Roach in Los Angeles, and everything started to click again.

It may just keep on clicking. At age 35, Toney now fights like a 25-year-old with 30 years of experience. Is that hard to figure out? You bet. Ask Holyfield. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

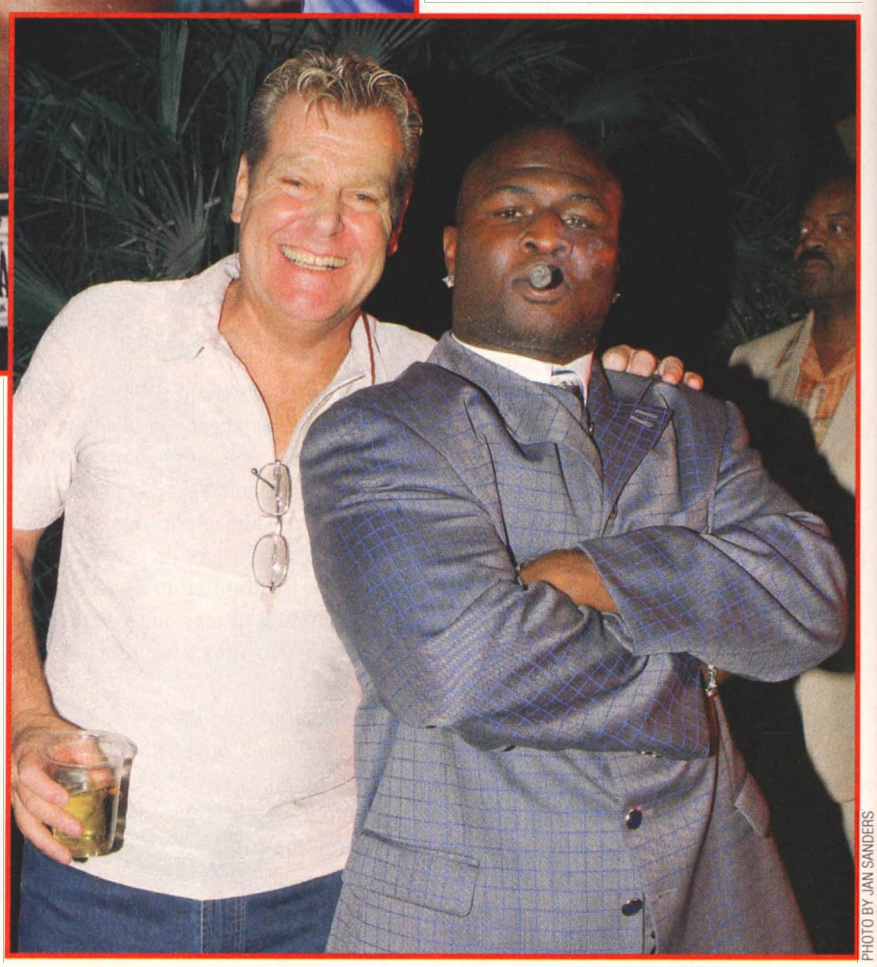

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

The dynamic duo of Toney and promoter Dan Goossen enjoy themselves at the postfight victory party. The pair has rebuilt their careers together and now look forward creating additional superfights.

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Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley! Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

Dec. 1995: Mike Tyson (vs. Peter McNeeley): The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Morrison-Lewis preview, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, 10 best chins.

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May 1997: De La Hoya-Whitaker: Can "Sweet Pea" Stop Oscar's March To Greatness? Plus: Fitzsimmons-Corbett, Junior Jones, Phillip Holiday, Don King, Zaragoza-McCullough.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

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May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.

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Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.

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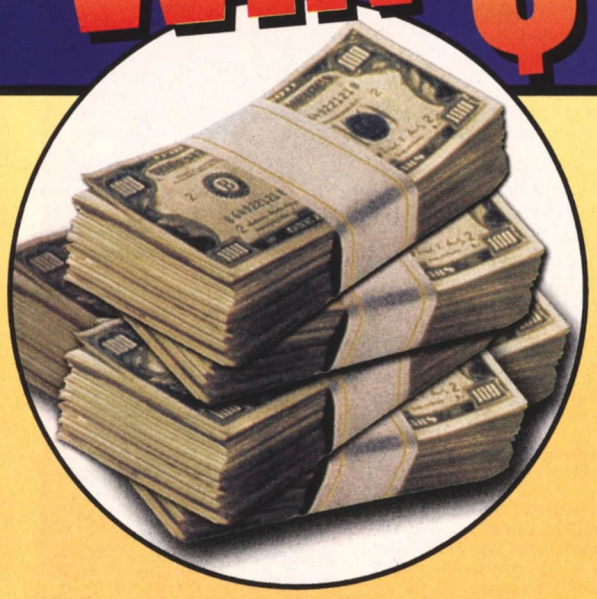

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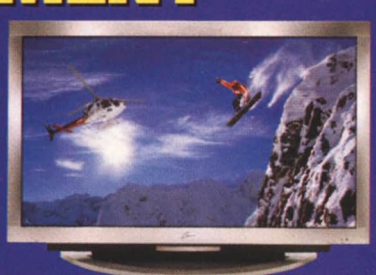

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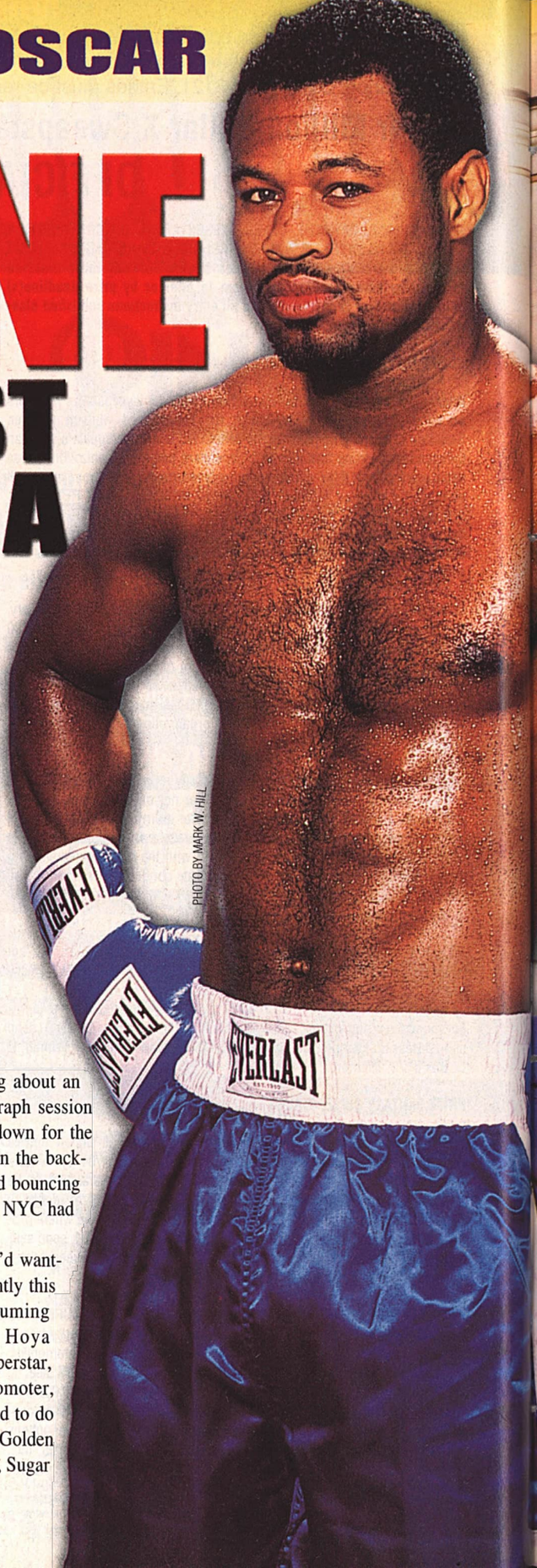

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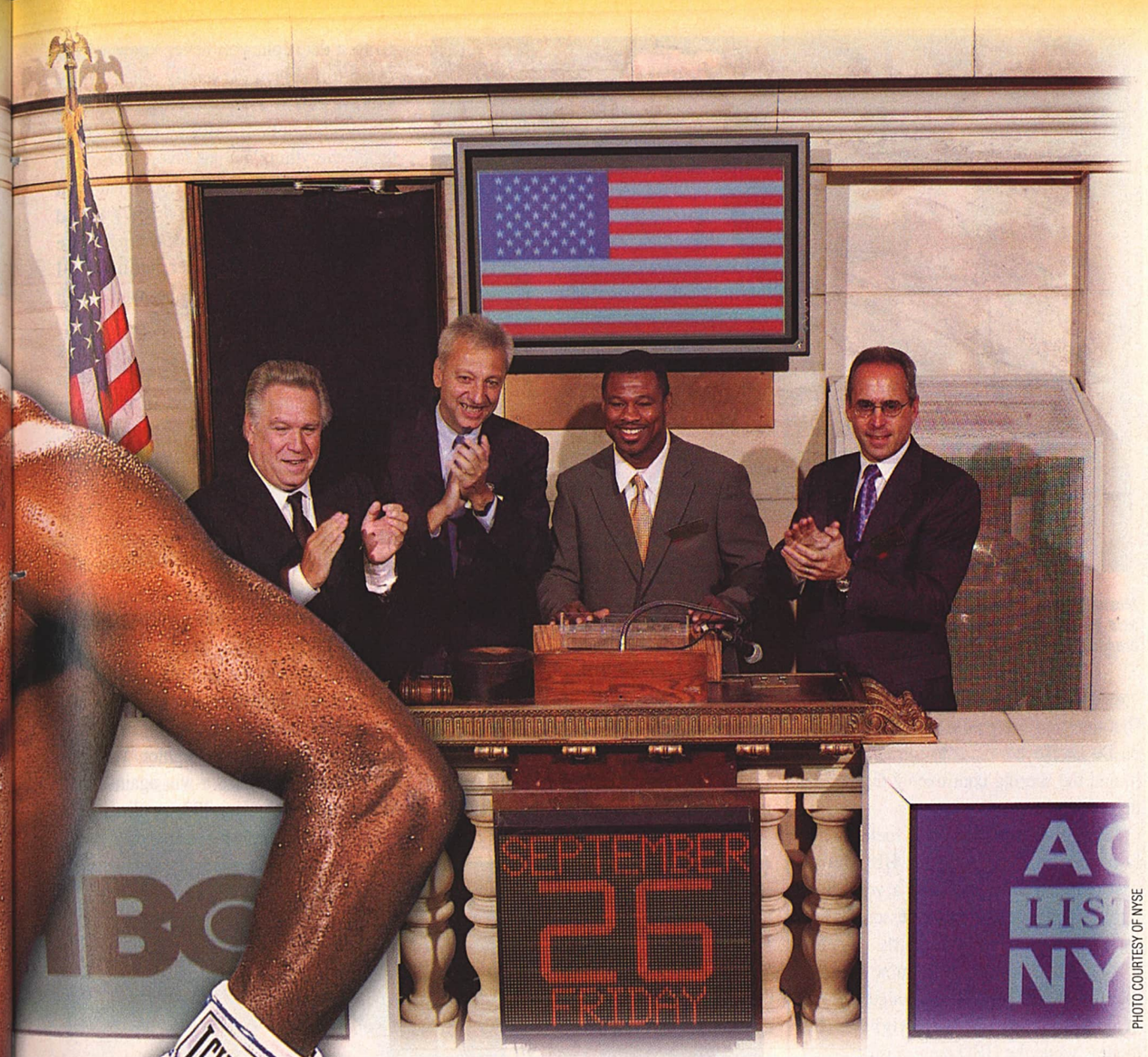

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Capping off his whirlwind week in New York, Mosley rings the bell to kick off trading at the New York Stock Exchange. Surrounding Mosley are (from left) promoter Gary Shaw, NYSE Executive Vice President-Communications Robert Zito, and HBO Sports President Ross Greenburg.

By Eric Raskin

In 24 rounds, Oscar De La Hoya couldn't put Sugar Shane Mosley to sleep. He never came close, in fact.

But New York City did what De La Hoya couldn't. It wore Mosley down gradually, and when The Big Apple finally had him ripe for the picking, it turned out his lights.

At 4:30 on a Wednesday afternoon in late-September, after a day of interviews, appearances, and traffic jams—made worse than the typical Manhattan gridlock by the fact that President Bush had descended upon the city at the same time—Mosley, running about an hour late for an autograph session at Foot Locker, went down for the count. He was asleep in the backseat of the car, his head bouncing lightly off the window. NYC had scored a TKO.

Mosley had said he'd wanted to do things differently this time. Rather than assuming that beating De La Hoya would make him a superstar, as he and his then-promoter, Cedric Kushner, seemed to do after he first beat "The Golden Boy" on June 17, 2000, Sugar Shane decided to put in a superstar effort in the wake of his second victory over Oscar. He did the West Coast thing for a week, making friends with Jay Leno, Jimmy Kimmel, Bernie Mac, and, consequently, millions of Americans, and then he headed to the East Coast, where Mosley, promoter Gary Shaw, and publicist Fred Sternburg tackled a demanding, at times hectic, schedule.

His Wednesday included a pep talk at a Manhattan school, an appearance on BET's *Rap City*, an interview with BET radio, a live interview and a separate taped one-on-one for ABC News, the Foot Locker appearance, a meeting with his lawyer, Judd Burstein, signing one autograph after another as New Yorkers recognized him on the street, and, mixed in with all of that, an interview with THE RING. That evening, Mosley had an opportunity to cap off his day by attending a movie premiere, but he turned it down—not because he wanted to catch up on his shuteye, but because he wanted to play some basketball instead. So he played hoops until 11:00 at night, then woke up Thursday at 6 a.m. to board a flight to Washington, D.C. During lunch that day with the editors of *USA Today* just outside of D.C., Mosley said that the New York publicity tour had been "more work than training."

It was in training, of course, that he put in the work that made this work possible. It was in training that Mosley got in the kind of shape to sweep the last five rounds on two of the judges' scorecards and pull out the win in the De La Hoya rematch. Unfortunately for Mosley, whenever a member of the mainstream media inter-

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Mosley catches a flailing De La Hoya with a left hand in their close 12-round battle. Sugar Shane said that when he watched the tape of the fight afterward, he could only laugh at how the HBO broadcast crew was failing to notice the clean, effective punches he was landing.

viewed him during his victory tour, their first question centered not on that win, but on De La Hoya's plans to formally protest it, and the scoring controversy those plans helped ignite.

That controversy was also fueled heavily by the commentary of the HBO broadcast team, which presented a very close fight as a one-sided boxing lesson by pre-fight favorite De La Hoya. In the days following the bout, Mosley had time to watch the tape twice, and felt the judges' scores of 115-113 for him were right on the money, while the HBO crew wasn't.

"I just laugh every time I watch it and hear the commentary," Mosley said, flashing his ever-present dimpled smile. "While they're saying 'Great bodyshot by De La Hoya,' I'm almost putting him on the seat of his pants with a left hook. I'm like, *Whoa, they didn't just see that I hit him with the most impressive shot?!* But it's funny to me. I just laugh at it."

Mosley wasn't laughing at the conclusion of the fight, however, and that's a major point of interest to those who scored for De La Hoya. A lot of fans are still harping on Mosley's facial expressions—the lack of enthusiasm after the final bell, the bewildered shock when Michael Buffer announced him the winner—as evidence that even Sugar Shane knew De La Hoya had beaten him. But Mosley insists that's not the case, and he does so with an earnestness that makes you believe this isn't just some after-the-fact cover story.

"Before the decision, I was thinking to myself that I won the fight, but when you go to a decision, you never know what's going to happen, especially when I'm in Vegas, and it's De La Hoya and Bob Arum's promotion," Mosley explained. "I mean, everything's in his favor. So for it to be a close fight, well, I felt I won, but I just didn't know which way it would go. And that's why my father was saying those things to me in the corner, telling me I needed all the late rounds, because he felt the same things."

Maybe, also, the expression of shock formed because Mosley just wasn't used to hearing his name called out in victory at the end of a fight anymore. It had, after all, been 26 months since Mosley had won a fight, going back to his third-round knockout of Adrian Stone in July '01. For a guy who once won 17 fights in a 26-month span, that's a long time to go without having your hand raised.

There was the stunning first loss to Vernon Forrest, which stripped him of his invincibility, and the painfully uneventful rematch, which further accentuated Sugar Shane's mortality and also chipped into his reputation as a must-see fighter. When he couldn't even produce a win against Raul Marquez in February '03, settling for a

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Late in the fight, Mosley came on strong, demonstrating for the second time his superiority over De La Hoya in terms of conditioning. Mosley showed surprising strength at 154 pounds, but also relied on the speed and bodypunching of his 135-pound days to pull out the win.

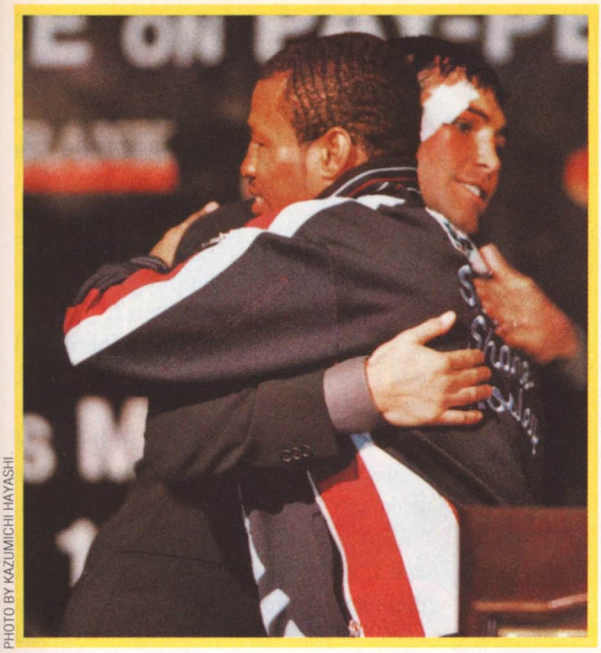


PHOTO BY KAZUMICHI HAYASHI

Mosley and De La Hoya hug at the postfight press conference—moments before De La Hoya would launch into a sad whine-fest about the scoring of the fight. Mosley and Shaw both insist that if there is a third fight, it will be fought on Sugar Shane's terms, not Oscar's.

three-round no-contest and looking relatively ordinary along the way, the most dreaded word a fighter can hear started creeping into the analyses. Some of the experts were wondering if Mosley was "shot." At least one writer suggested going into the De La Hoya rematch that he might be this era's Meldrick Taylor.

But Mosley wouldn't hear of it.

"Honestly, I really didn't think about the losses," Mosley told THE RING. "I didn't think about not winning a fight in two years. It passed by so fast, I didn't even know. The losses were used as a learning experience. I went back to the drawing board, corrected things I did wrong, and made the adjustments."

"I asked him the question in camp over and over again about Vernon and Marquez, and he always repeated, 'These are just learning experiences,'" seconded promoter Shaw. "I said, 'They're not affecting you at all? Be honest with me. Because I can only help you if I can get into your head.' And he said, 'Gary, I swear they're just learning experiences.' I said, 'Well, what did you learn?' He said, 'I learned I gotta be the 135-pound Sugar Shane Mosley, the guy who was on his toes, breaking guys down to the body.'"

Another important conversation Shaw had with Mosley in camp centered around two things the promoter felt Sugar Shane needed to do before the fight even started to gain an advantage in the fight. Shaw told Mosley, "We need to win the press conference, we need to win the weigh-in, and then you'll win the fight." Of course, impartial minds know it's never as simple as that, and to act as though Mosley had this fight won before it started, when in fact no one was even sure he had it won the moment it ended, is absurd. But Mosley did assert himself at the final press conference and at the weigh-in enough to, in Shaw's opinion, gain a crucial psychological edge.

The final prefight press conference was an entertaining affair, highlighted by Mosley's looseness and playfulness. Thought by some to be so nice that he's boring, Mosley showed a clever edginess when he one-upped De La Hoya's trainer, the garrulous and egomaniacal Floyd Mayweather Sr. Having already drawn laughs with pre-rehearsed stunts like presenting De La Hoya with a giant AARP card (Oscar said he'd retire if he lost the rematch) and presenting a blown-up deposit slip to Arum for the $500,000 Mosley would be owed out of De La Hoya's purse if he won the fight, Mosley's best and funniest move was improvised. With Mayweather steaming through one of his trademark poems, Sugar Shane caught everyone by surprise when he stood up, strode over to Mayweather, and dropped a coin in an empty glass in front of him, as if to say, "Thanks for your act." The gathered press burst into laughter. And with De La Hoya so tight and tense by comparison in Shaw's view, Team Mosley felt they'd decisively won the press conference.

Who won the weigh-in wasn't even a matter of opinion. With rumors swirling all through training that Mosley was lifting weights during camp and struggling to make weight as a result—all of which was untrue, but the Mosley people chose not to deny it—all eyes were on the scale when he stepped on. But the beam stopped dead-

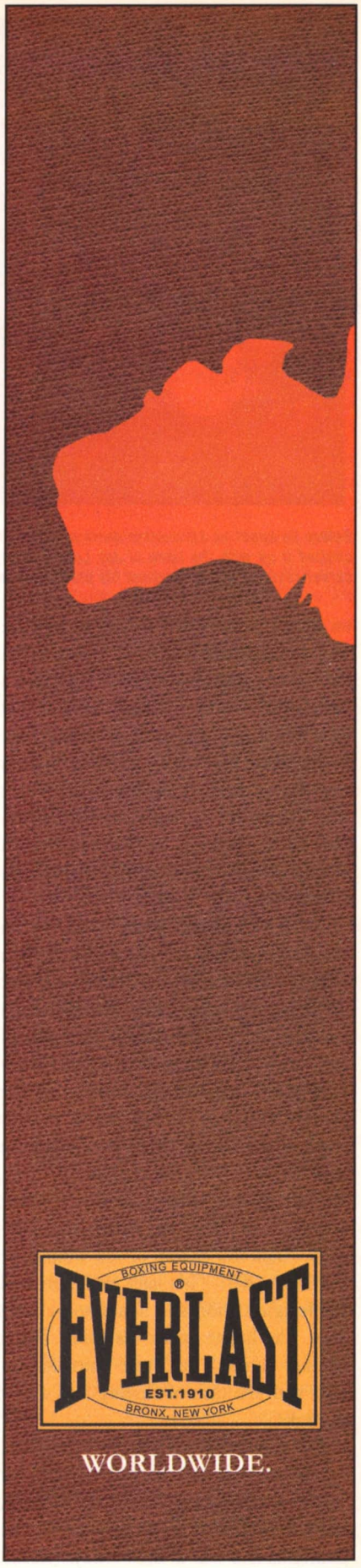


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO

Before he spent an exhausting week in New York, Mosley hit the West Coast talk show circuit and chatted it up with the likes of Jay Leno (pictured). Sugar Shane made every effort following this career-reviving win to increase his profile and his star power.

where Jin continued to grill him. By that night, Shaw was Mosley's promoter on a handshake agreement, and to this day, Shaw still hasn't signed Mosley to a contract, such is his faith in the bond between he and Sugar Shane.

"The biggest difference between Gary and Cedric is that Gary's more hands-on," Mosley said. "He develops a more personal relationship with his fighters."

"I have a relationship with him that I don't have with anybody else," said Shaw, who, by virtue of being a boxing promoter, is probably not untalented in the art of bull-slinging, but who seems to have a genuinely close relationship with Mosley. "We were in the car this morning, just he and I, and I looked at him and I said, 'I don't know if you know how much I really care for you.' And he turned to me and said, 'Well, we're family.'"

on at 154 pounds, and Mosley's physique was downright intimidating. De La Hoya has never made any effort to look like a bodybuilder—which is fine, because that isn't the name of the game in boxing—but he just didn't look nearly as powerful or as ripped as Mosley. If anyone in Las Vegas was waiting for the weigh-in before running to the betting window, the smart money at that point was being laid down on the underdog.

But no bettor is winning as big on Mosley as Shaw is. The former Main Events COO has now become a major player on his own thanks to his association with the junior middleweight champion of the world. It was an association that Shaw admits fell into his lap, starting with a phone call out of the blue a few months prior to the De La Hoya rematch from Sugar Shane's wife, Jin Mosley.

"She's a very strong woman, and she doesn't really take any mess from anybody," said the champ of the woman he married in 2001. "It's hard for her to hold her tongue when she hears something false. She has to speak the truth. That's just her nature." So Shane entrusted his wife with the task of finding him a new promoter.

On a recommendation from Burstein, Jin called Shaw and interviewed him for the job on the phone. Next thing he knew, Shaw had flown from New Jersey to California and was at the Mosleys' house,

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

At the final prefight press conference, De La Hoya's promoter, Bob Arum, shows off the $500,000 Mosley would be getting out of De La Hoya's purse if he prevailed. More important than the money, though, was the way this win put Mosley back on top after a two-year slump.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Mosley and his father/trainer, Jack, were exuberant following the victory. Like his son, Jack Mosley earned a measure of redemption, as he had come under fire for his work in the losses to Vernon Forrest, but did a magnificent job of motivating Shane in the De La Hoya rematch.

Maybe not the way Mosley's father and his wife and his kids are family (Shane and Jin have two together and a third due in November, plus one each from previous relationships), but there is a bond between Shaw and his client. For the friendly but instinctively shy and quiet Mosley, Shaw acts as a mouthpiece, freely offering anecdotes that would be infinitely more difficult to pull out of the fighter. It's an indication of what a down-to-earth person Mosley is that when he hits New York for a week, his entourage consists strictly of Shaw and Sternburg—there's no "Pomona Posse" clinging on at every turn.

Mosley is, in a word, refreshing. He's one of the few star athletes left who's grounded enough to use the word "I" when referring to himself. And if that doesn't help his profile as much getting a tattoo on his face or starting a press conference rumble might, then so be it.

"The way I am is the way I am," Mosley said. "That's my personality. And I wouldn't want to be any other type of person. When you act like a person that you're not, then you're not really being true. Whatever I feel is what I give to the people. I'm giving the people a part of me. Yeah, if I'm feeling radical on a given day, then I'll be radical that day. But I'll always be real."

Unfortunately, Mosley being Mosley hasn't made him a crossover star on the level of his most famous rival, De La Hoya. Which is why, if a third fight reaches the negotiation stage, you can understand The Golden Boy demanding the lion's share of the purse once again. And if that turns out to be the case, the Mosley camp says there won't be a Shane-Oscar III.

"It would only be right that I get the bigger chunk of the purse, being that I beat him twice—not just once, but twice," Mosley said. "I took a lot less than I was supposed to for the second fight. So this time, I need to get my just due."

"At the minimum, Shane needs parity," Shaw insisted. "I'll guarantee you this: Sugar Shane Mosley will treat Oscar De La Hoya much fairer than Oscar De La Hoya treated Sugar Shane Mosley."

If the third De La Hoya fight can't be made, though, there are plenty of other options for the new champ at or around his weight. From 147-pound champion Ricardo Mayorga, to 160-pound king Bernard Hopkins, to junior middle contenders Fernando Vargas and Winky Wright, and even to two-time conqueror Forrest, Mosley is open to any and all possibilities (though he humbly admits Forrest isn't his first choice for the immediate future). The signs were pointing toward a bout with the lesser—but still credible—Javier Castillejo in March '04, but Shaw insists that Mosley won't allow the mistakes of the past to be repeated. Whereas he languished against the likes of Antonio Diaz, Shannan Taylor, and Adrian Stone after the first De La Hoya win, Mosley promises a major pay-per-view fight by next summer.

Sugar Shane is not standing pat. He is making every effort to achieve the superstar status he let slip through his hands three years ago.

"My career is not over yet. I still have a lot to go," Mosley said. "So to assume that De La Hoya will be remembered as the biggest star of this era, that might be true, but it might not be true. Beating Oscar a second time, this was my rebirth. This is my rebirth and the beginning of a great, new career for me." ■

A KING-SIZED FIGHT CARD

Three Ring Belts On The Line In One Night!

By Nigel Collins

Don King is nothing if not resilient. It hasn't been the best of years for boxing's most famous promoter, but instead of throwing in the towel and hoping for a brighter 2004, King is holding what amounts to a year-end sale on December 13 in Atlantic City.

Unlike most bargain bins, King's holiday grab bag isn't filled with outdated knockoffs and mismatched socks. Instead, he's patched together a pay-per-view card featuring three legitimate world championship fights—the first time since the inception of The Ring's new championship policy that more than one of the magazine's belts are on the line on the same show—and a massive undercard featuring damned near every fighter of consequence in King's vast stable of fighters.

On their own, none of the bouts are PPV worthy, but put them together on one marathon card, and you have something boxing fans might very well want to buy.

You have to give King his props. He's taken a bunch of unfinished business and an assortment of loose ends, thrown them together, and cooked up a palatable pugilistic omelet. Let's take a closer look at the ingredients.

World Middleweight Championship

Champion BERNARD HOPKINS 42-2-1 (31) vs. Challenger WILLIAM JOPPY 34-2-1 (25)

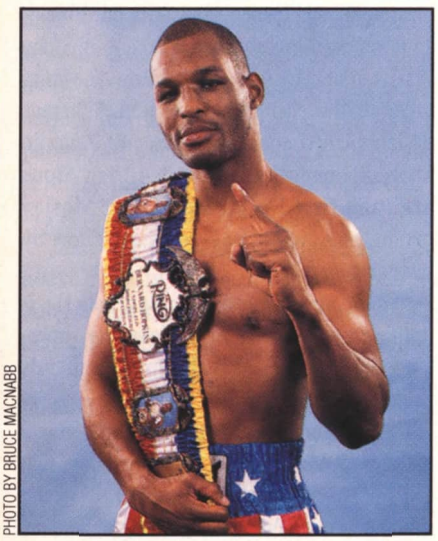


PHOTO BY BRUCE MACNABB

Hopkins hopes to accomplish three things versus Joppy: Tally his 17th successful defense of the middleweight crown, terminate his contract with Don King, and set the stage for bigger fights in 2004.

The matchup: This one is strictly business, and if it wasn't Hopkins' final fight for King, it's highly unlikely it would be happening. Not only that, Hopkins is taking the fight at a cut-rate price in order to end his obligation to King and hopefully notch his 17th defense.

The King-Hopkins relationship has been contentious throughout, and there's little doubt that King would like nothing better than a Joppy victory, as it would allow him to retain control of the middleweight championship. That makes for a back-story far more intriguing than the fight, but even so, Joppy figures to give Hopkins his most competitive fight since "The Executioner" upset Felix Trinidad in September 2001. That's something, at least.

If all you look at is how they performed against Trinidad, we may as well just add a kayo win to Hopkins' record, a loss to

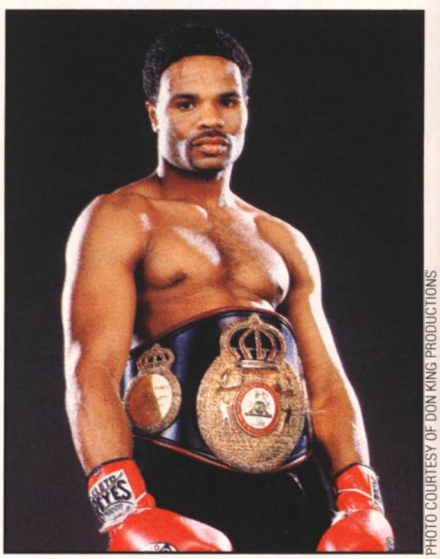
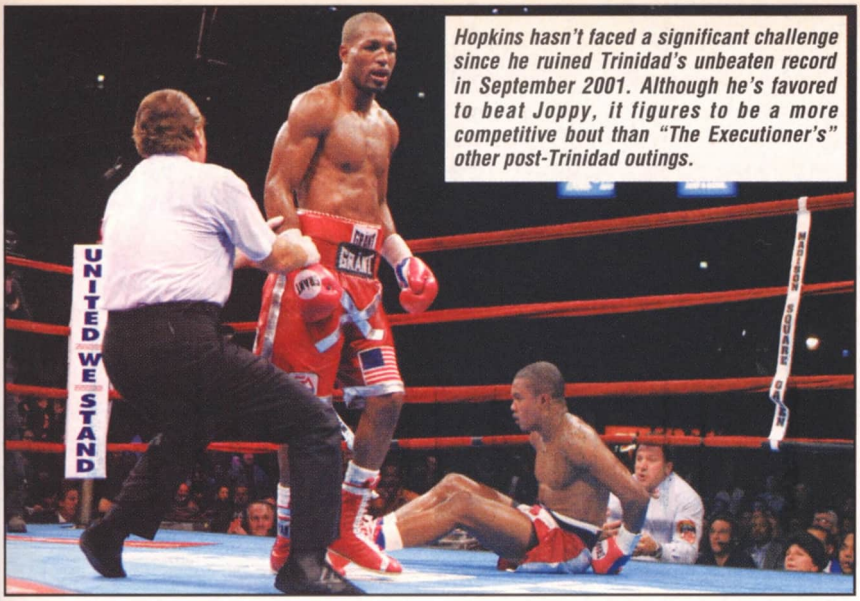


PHOTO COURTESY OF DON KING PRODUCTIONS

Joppy, who has held the WBA version of the 160-pound title on several occasions, knows that his bout with Hopkins will probably be his last shot at the big time and that a victory will make people forget about his loss to Felix Trinidad.



Hopkins hasn't faced a significant challenge since he ruined Trinidad's unbeaten record in September 2001. Although he's favored to beat Joppy, it figures to be a more competitive bout than "The Executioner's" other post-Trinidad outings.

Joppy's, and forget actually having the fight.

While there's no getting around the fact that Joppy was splattered by Trinidad, you have to like the way he climbed right back up on the horse in his very next fight, taking on previously undefeated contender Howard Eastman. It was a demanding fight, and Joppy was forced to absorb some hard right-handers before winning a close 12-round decision. It took grit (and perhaps a touch of desperation) to accept such a tough assignment after being slammed by Trinidad.

In his only bout since Eastman, Joppy traveled to Tokyo, Japan, in October '02, where he tallied a 10th-round TKO of local favorite Naotaka Hozumi.

Besides the Trinidad disaster, Joppy's only other blemishes are a 1995 draw with Rodney Toney and a '97 decision loss to Julio Cesar Green, whom he beat in two subsequent bouts.

With the middleweight division talent pool drying up faster than Mike Tyson's cash flow, Joppy is as good a challenger as there is without reaching down to the 154- and 147-pound classes. He's THE RING's number-one contender, and although he's never beaten a great fighter, neither had Hopkins until he faced Trinidad.

What Hopkins has to do to win: Perhaps the most crucial thing will be focusing on Joppy and not looking ahead to the more appetizing matches he envisions following the end of his contract with King. For Joppy, *this* is the big one. In order to hand him his third loss, Hopkins will have to put out considerably more than he had to against Carl Daniels (KO 10) and Morrade Hakkar (KO 8), the champ's two post-Trinidad opponents.

Don't look for Hopkins to try to blast Joppy into oblivion in the same rapid-fire manner as did Trinidad. That's simply not the Philadelphian's style. Instead, he'll go about his task in a workmanlike manner, gradually breaking down his rival with jabs, bodyshots, and an occasional powerpunch before opening up with combinations.

Hopkins being Hopkins, it would come as no surprise if he also mixes in a few low blows and forearms when the ref's vision is blocked. It would be a shock if he didn't. Despite having the ability to win within the rules, Hopkins' bullying achieves two ends: It weakens his foes, and strengthens his ability to intimidate. It's as much a part of his fight plan as the jab, and anybody who thinks this cagey, old campaigner is not in full control of himself at all times is fooling himself.

Put it all together, along with Hopkins' old-school know-how and steely nerve, and you have a future Hall of Famer who is capable of beating anyone near his weight, including Joppy.

What Joppy has to do to win: It was Roy Jones' hand speed as much as anything else that enabled him to decision Hopkins back in May '93, and hand speed is the one department where Joppy might hold an edge. He must utilize it, along with his footwork, if he's going to have any chance of springing an upset.

Getting off to a brisk start is also imperative, but Joppy doesn't want to get involved in too many exchanges. Judging by their respective fights with Trinidad, Hopkins has a superior chin. And besides, when was the last time you saw anybody trade with him and come out on top? Joppy needs to move in, get off a few punches, and then either tie up or move away before Hopkins retaliates. It sounds simple enough, but so far only Jones has been able to pull it off, and even he wasn't entirely convincing.

A busy yet non-confrontational type of fight is Joppy's best bet, and if the two years of relative inactivity or advancing age have slowed Hopkins down to any great extent, Joppy is enough of a pro to take advantage of it.

Prediction: Hopkins is a great fighter, Joppy just a good one. Unless time has altered that equation dramatically, class will tell. A late-round TKO is the most likely outcome, though a determined Joppy could last the distance.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Joppy stayed in contention after the loss to Trinidad by outpointing previously undefeated Howard Eastman in his very next fight (pictured). He absorbed some hard shots before prevailing, indicating that the Trinidad blastout didn't make him gun-shy.

World Welterweight Championship

Champion RICARDO MAYORGA 25-3-1 (22) vs. Challenger CORY SPINKS 31-2 (11)

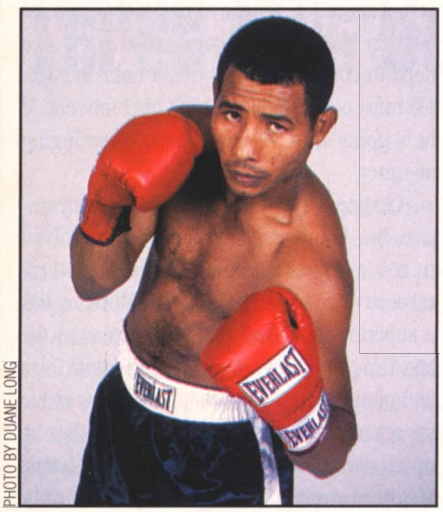


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

The wild and wacky Mayorga will bring his special brand of mayhem to Atlantic City for the first time when he defends against Spinks. He is rapidly becoming the most popular fighter King promotes.

The matchup: Mayorga is the hottest fighter on the show, and if anyone can steal the spotlight from Hopkins, it's the flamboyant flamethrower from Nicaragua. The free-swinging welterweight champion is one of those rare fighters you want to see regardless of who he's fighting. Which is a good thing in this case, because "El Matador" is just about the only fighter in the world most fans would want to see in the same ring with the safety-first slickster from St. Louis.

There's more at stake here than the welterweight championship of the world. With Hopkins' stint with King rapidly drawing to a close, Mayorga just might be the most bankable fighter in DK's stable. Not only has he captured the fans' imagination with his outrageous personality and wins over Vernon Forrest (KO 3, W 12), if he gets past Spinks, attractive bouts with Shane Mosley, Oscar De La Hoya, and maybe even Hopkins could be on tap for next year.

Spinks is also under contract to King, so technically the promoter can't lose. But while Spinks, THE RING's number-three contender, is an accomplished craftsman, he means zero at the box office. Who do you think Uncle Don will be rooting for?

From a spectator's point of view, think of this one as Mayorga-Forrest lite.

Like Forrest, Spinks is a slippery boxer who knows how to shut down an opponent's offense. But he lacks Forrest's punching power and is even more defensive-minded, and if he weren't going up against such an aggressive antagonist, a stinker would be practically guaranteed. With the bomb-throwing Nicaraguan in his face, however, some sort of fun is practically assured. We're just not sure what kind.

What Mayorga has to do to win: If you thought Mayorga-Forrest was an untidy affair, wait until you see this one. Spinks is going to run, and when he can't run, he's going to hold. Still, the challenger would be well-advised to watch himself in the clinches. The way Mayorga contorts his body and yanks his arms free to get at clinging foes, what seems like a safe haven can quickly turn into a torture chamber.

It's even worse on the outside, where Mayorga can get maximum leverage on his wicked swings. Just about the only place an opponent is safe is on his stool.

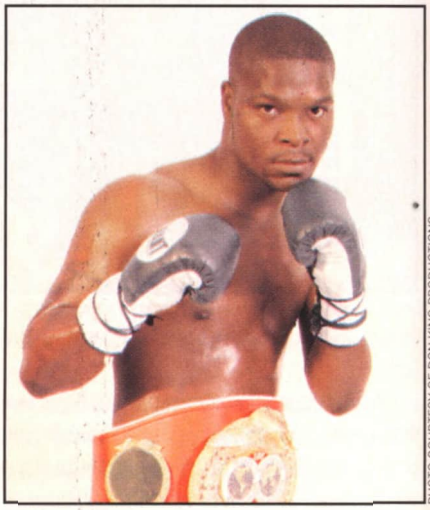


PHOTO COURTESY OF DON KING PRODUCTIONS

Spinks has his work cut out for him against the rampaging Mayorga. While he has the defensive style to make things difficult for the champion, the challenger doesn't pack much of a punch.

Mayorga isn't easily discouraged when an adversary is unwilling to stand and trade, he just keeps coming. And Spinks can forget about him running out of gas late in the fight. Mayorga proved in the second Forrest fight that despite a fondness for beer and cigarettes, he can keep the pressure on for 12 rounds.

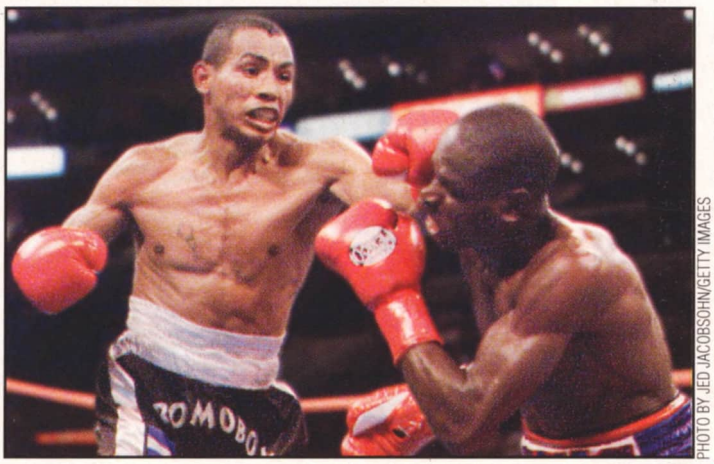


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

An onrushing Mayorga clocks "Six Heads" Lewis with a left during their July 2001 bout in Los Angeles. Whether or not Spinks has the ability to stand up under such a frenzied attack is the big question going into the bout.

All Mayorga has to do is be himself. In other words, let it all hang out in a take-no-prisoners attack. While he very well might be capable of fighting a more controlled, aesthetically pleasing fight, this is not the time for him to dazzle us with his boxing skills. Against a southpaw spoiler like Spinks, Mayorga has to be at his menacing best to win impressively.

What Spinks has to do to win: Despite his relative low profile, Spinks, 25, is not without merit. His first loss,

by decision to Antonio Diaz in December '98, was very close, and his second setback, to Michele Piccirillo in Italy, was an outright robbery. Justice was served in March '03 when Spinks returned to Italy and won a unanimous decision over Piccirillo for the IBF belt. The Mayorga bout will be his first since then.

Mayorga's loose-cannon persona has a way of emotionally unhinging opponents, and how Spinks reacts is crucial. You wouldn't have thought that a cool customer like Forrest would have been so easily flustered. But El Matador's crudely brilliant mind games clearly ruffled him. Will Spinks, with less experience in major fights, handle it any better?

Style-wise, Spinks is the complete antithesis of his more famous father, Leon. Instead of a straight-ahead pressure fighter, he's a speedy slickster who likes to work the perimeter of the ring, piling up points with southpaw jabs and quick combinations.

Like Mayorga, he has to stick with what got him here. Any attempt to outmacho the champion would be disastrous, especially considering Spinks' popgun offense. The way for him to go is with caution, constantly moving, repeatedly turning Mayorga, clinching when necessary, and landing just enough punches to win one round at a time. It will take nerve, and there will be no room for mistakes, but Spinks has the style to make it work if he can fight a close to perfect fight—and Mayorga has an off night.

Prediction: Forrest made the rematch with Mayorga close by avoiding the kind of flush shots that finished him in the third round of their first encounter and by staging a mid-rounds rally. Spinks is in the unenviable position of trying to achieve more with less. The guess here is that the best he can do is lose an ugly decision, but without Forrest's punching power to hold off the rampaging champion, a stoppage win for Mayorga is more likely, probably around the midway point.

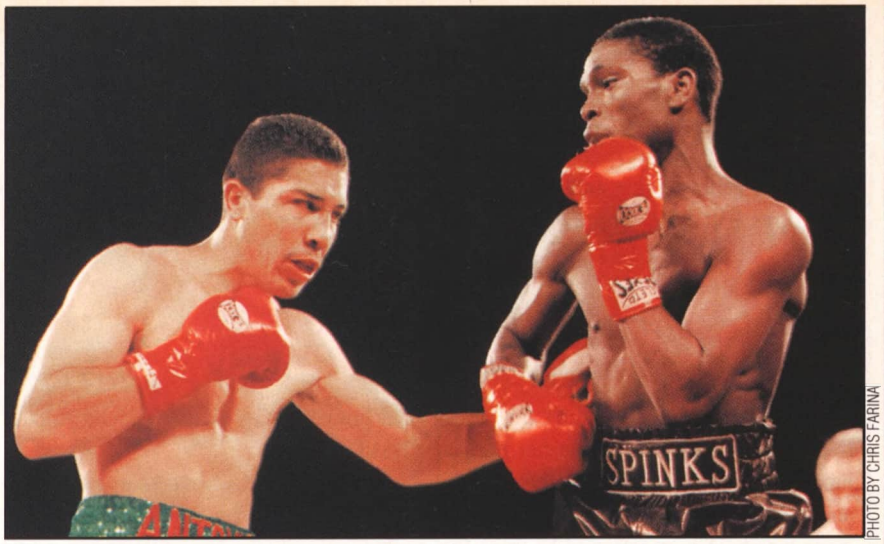


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Antonio Diaz utilized a body attack to squeak past Spinks via close decision in December 1998 (pictured). With a little bit of luck, Spinks could be undefeated, as his only other loss was a flagrant robbery.

World Junior Flyweight Championship

Champion ROSENDO ALVAREZ 32-2-1 (21) vs. Challenger JOSE VICTOR BURGOS 35-13-2 (21)

The matchup: This will be Alvarez' first defense of THE RING belt he captured by outpointing Bebis Mendoza in their March '03 rubber match. The hard-nosed Nicaraguan will be facing a veteran campaigner in Burgos, who picked up the IBF version of the 108-pound title with a 12th-round TKO of Alex Sanchez in March '03.

Alvarez, thanks mainly to his two exhilarating battles with the now-retired Ricardo Lopez, is the better known of the pair. The challenger has a lot of losses on his log, but many of them were to top opposition such as Eric Morel (L 12), Roberto Levya (KO by 8), and Baby Jake Matlala (Tech. Loss 8). "El Acorazado" hasn't lost since 2000, and performed well against Sanchez, whom he'd lost to and drawn with in two previous outings. He enters the bout as THE RING's number-nine junior fly contender.

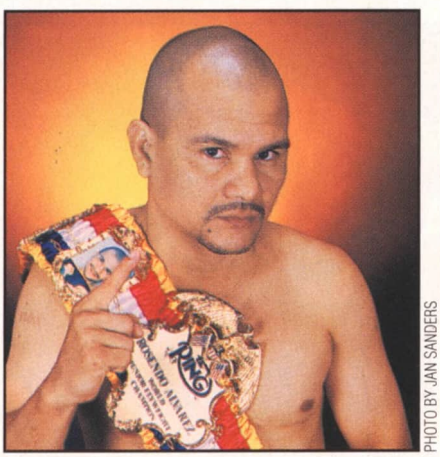


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Rosendo Alvarez will be making his first defense of THE RING junior flyweight championship belt on King's colossal card. He's up against Jose Victor Burgos, THE RING's number-nine contender, in a scheduled 12-rounder.

What Alvarez has to do to win: "El Bufalo's" main forte is strength, and he likes to work his way in close, where he can unleash heavy shots to the head and body. Mendoza gave him trouble with constant movement and quick bursts of counterpunching, but Alvarez kept the pressure on and finished the stronger of the two to take a majority decision in their last meeting.

Burgos isn't as slick as Mendoza, so look for the Mexican veteran to try to keep at a distance and pick his spots. This means that Alvarez will have to rely on his old pals—pressure and power—to walk

down Burgos and ultimately outpunch him.

What Burgos has to do to win: In his belt-winning victory over Sanchez, Burgos fell behind early. He seemed to being having trouble getting going and did a bit of clowning. But he eventually found a rhythm, closed Sanchez' right eye, lumped up his face, and was well ahead when the fight was stopped in the 12th round. He'll need a similar type of performance to beat Alvarez.

Prediction: Both men have been idle for some time, which could hurt the 33-year-old Alvarez more than Burgos, who is almost four years younger. But four of Burgos' 13 defeats came inside the distance, indicating that his chin isn't entirely reliable. Unless he's drained from making weight, Alvarez should grind his man down and score a late-round TKO.

The Mother Of All Undercards

Fans planning on attending the show live at Boardwalk Hall had better pack a lunch, bring their toothbrush and pajamas, and remember to let the cat out before they leave home. They're going to be there for a while.

King won the purse bid to stage a "WBA interim heavyweight title" fight (whatever that is) between **Hasim Rahman**, 35-4-1 (29), and **David Tua**, 42-3-1 (37), who have already fought each other twice. Tua stopped Rahman the first time, but needed the help of an after-the-bell cheap shot and shoddy officiating to do so. The rematch, this past March, resulted in an inconclusive draw. If one of them can emerge a clear-cut winner this time, he'll still be in the title hunt. The loser can forget it.

Although King was still trying to swing a deal as we went to press, Tua's participation was jeopardized in September when he split with longtime manager Kevin Barry. Rahman, under contract to King, will be on the card, and if Tua isn't in the other corner, King will fill the spot with some other heavyweight with which he has promotional ties, maybe John Ruiz or Fres Oquendo.

Regardless of whom Rahman's opponent turns out to be, and despite what the alphabet boys tell you, this is not a title bout, nor even an official eliminator. Lennox Lewis, who has beaten both Rahman and Tua resoundingly, is still the heavyweight champion of the world, and he hasn't said a word about fighting the winner.

In a rematch of one of the year's best action fights, Nicaragua's **Luis Perez**, 21-1 (14), defends the IBF junior bantamweight belt against the man he took it away from, **Felix Machado**, 22-4-1 (11), of Venezuela. Their first encounter, in January, was a war from first bell to last, and both men were hospitalized afterward. In that one, Perez set a frenzied pace and eventually overcame Machado's better boxing skills to take a split decision. If the rematch is half as good, fans will be in for a treat. Perez enters the bout as THE RING's fourth-rated 115-pound contender; Machado is number six. Unless their first fight took too much out of one or both of these tiny warriors, it should be another down-to-the-wire job, with either man capable of pulling out a win.

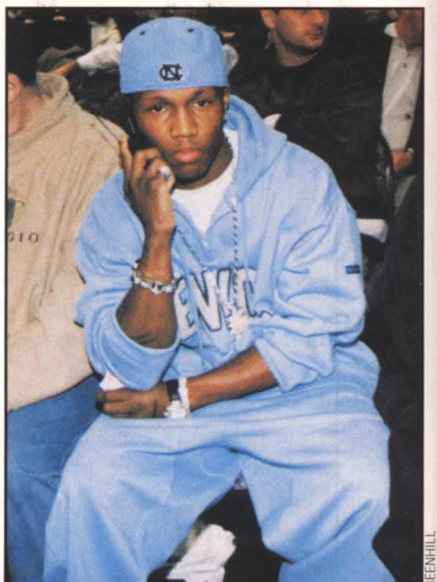


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Judah, who basically phoned in his win over "Chop Chop" Corley, gets another chance to prove he's as good as he thinks he is, this time against Colombian Jaime Rangel.

In another scheduled 12-rounder, **Zab Judah**, 29-1 (21), will take on Colombian **Jaime Rangel**, 29-4-1 (25). Judah, THE RING's number-two contender, decisioned DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley in his most recent bout, but didn't thrill anybody doing it. In Rangel, he faces an unknown who has had almost all of his pro fights in either Colombia or Venezuela. Unranked southpaw Rangel, whose nickname is "Tyson," has an impressive knockout percentage, but will need more than a good punch to get past the multi-talented, albeit inconsistent, Judah.

In a matchup of undefeated junior middleweights, Mexican knockout artist **Alex**

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Rahman and Tua trade bombs during their second bout. Even though it was a fairly entertaining fight, neither man appeared to be in top shape. Conditioning will probably be the deciding factor in the third get-together between the two highly rated heavyweights.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Luis Perez and Felix Machado (left) are set to go at each other again in a rematch of the thriller they staged in Washington, D.C., earlier this year. In their first fight, fiery Nicaraguan Perez closed his rival's right eye en route to an upset decision victory.

"Terra" Garcia, 22-0 (21), takes on Frenchman **Christophe Canclaux**, 23-0 (17). Garcia, THE RING's number-nine contender, is fresh from a punishing TKO of Rhoshii Wells and has the power to eventually threaten the upper echelon of a division currently ruled by Shane Mosley. The unranked Canclaux has a glossy looking record and owns the European 154-pound title, but there's nobody on his record approaching world-class, so Garcia will probably add another kayo to his impressive record.

In an interesting twist, King has scheduled Hopkins-Joppy, Mayorga-Spinks, Judah-Rangel, and the Rahman bout for the PPV telecast. In addition, he will allow viewers to select, via a Web poll, which one of the other bouts they want to see. The live crowd, of course, gets to see everything, providing they have the endurance. ■

PHOTO BY NICK PETROCCI

Red hot Alex Garcia fires a left at Rhoshii Wells during their junior middleweight bout in September. The undefeated Garcia tallied his 21st knockout in 22 fights when the referee rescued Wells at the end of the 10th round. Garcia will be fighting undefeated Frenchman Christophe Canclaux, the European 154-pound titleholder, on December 13.

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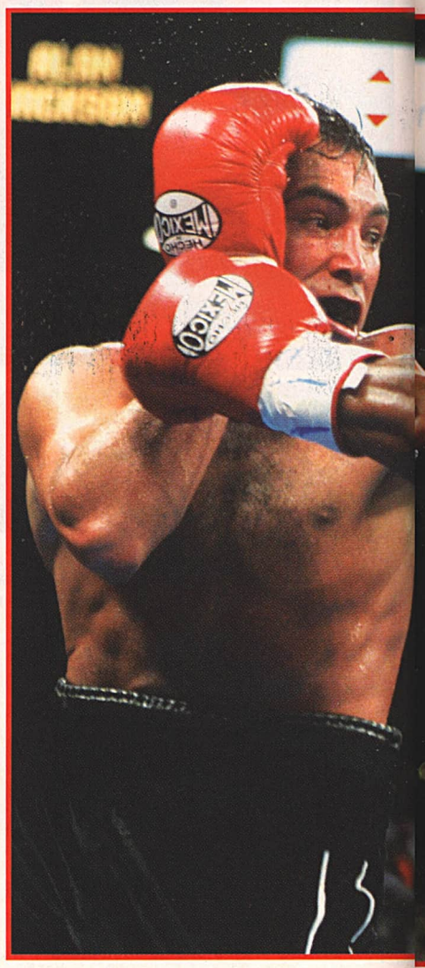
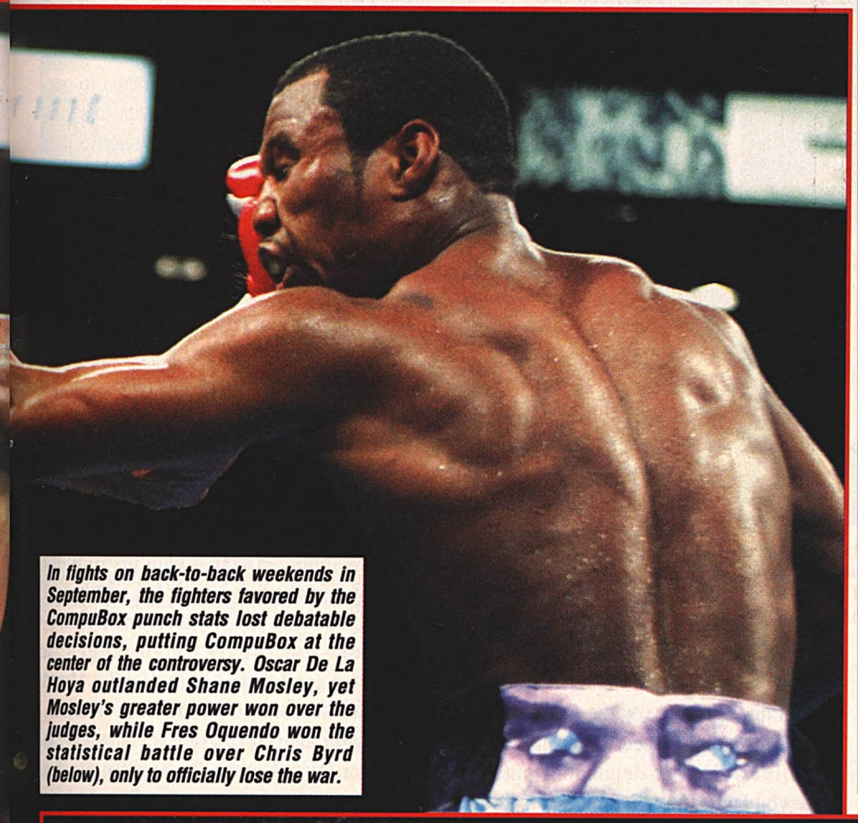
ANALYZING COMPUBOX:

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE COUNT ON PUNCHSTATS?





In fights on back-to-back weekends in September, the fighters favored by the CompuBox punch stats lost debatable decisions, putting CompuBox at the center of the controversy. Oscar De La Hoya outlanded Shane Mosley, yet Mosley's greater power won over the judges, while Fres Oquendo won the statistical battle over Chris Byrd (below), only to officially lose the war.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

By David Mayo

Statistics lie, the axiom goes, but the cliche stops short of complete accuracy, so it also fibs. Statistics lie to those who don't know how to apply them. Statistics deceive those who don't understand their methodology. Statistics baffle those who think numbers can fully measure any human endeavor.

The Detroit Tigers grounded into the fewest double plays in baseball in 2003. Good stat. Good team? No. The Tigers lost more games than any team in the history of the American League.

If you're looking for a basketball big man, would you rather have Marcus Camby, a consistent 11-point career scorer who needs offensive sets run through him to be effective, and is marginally tough? Or would you prefer an enforcer like Ben Wallace, a 5.5-points-per-game scorer who is petrified of his own jump shot, yet is a defensive wizard, runs the floor, and shoots several percentage points higher than Camby by creating point-blank offense through rebounding and hustle?

Do you want a 1,000-yard-a-season pussyfooting tailback, or a 600-yard-a-season banger who never fails in goal-line situations?

Then, of course, there is the boxing application, in which CompuBox Inc. quantifies the same quandary throughout the year: Do you prefer the artistry of the jabber, or the mayhem of the powerpuncher?

As in other sports, an ironclad answer does not always exist. Camby fits one set of needs, Wallace an entirely different one. The 1,000-yard runner may prove more beneficial in a limited passing attack. Pernell Whitaker won as effectively with jabs as Julio Cesar Chavez did with power, and there is widespread sentiment that he got the short end of their draw.

CompuBox has its limitations. But none of its drawbacks is as hurtful to the sport as misguided fans who interpret raw punching numbers as an indication of how a decision should go. It happened on consecutive September weekends, when CompuBox statistics and HBO announcers favored both Oscar De La Hoya and Fres Oquendo, but the three judges in each case scored unanimously for their respective opponents, Shane Mosley and Chris Byrd.

"De La Hoya cited the punch stats in his own defense at the press conference," said Bob Canobbio, CompuBox's cofounder. "But those numbers were bolstered by the jab. Oscar landed more than three times as many jabs as Mosley (106-33). In powerpunches, there was only a difference of 21 landed (115-94 for De La Hoya), which is fewer than two per round. And Mosley landed a higher percentage, according to us, and everyone agrees he landed the harder punches. So there's a case for Mosley right there, which no one seems to want to look at."

It is a classic dichotomy. On one side, Canobbio notes that in more than 90 percent of all cases—and there are plenty of cases, since CompuBox tracks in excess of 80 televised cards annually—the fighter landing the greater number of punches wins. On the other, he notes that raw numbers can be misleading, and the only way to employ CompuBox statistics with any accuracy is on a round-by-round basis, just as judges score fights.

"That's the implicit contradiction in scoring in general," HBO analyst Larry Merchant said. "The great sportswriter Red Smith used to say, 'If you want to know who won a fight, have a 10-year-old watch it, then tell you at the end who won.' The idea, of course, is that even a child can tell who got beaten up more. But in round-by-round scoring, that doesn't always hold true."

Even within that framework, De La Hoya outlanded Mosley in 11 of 12

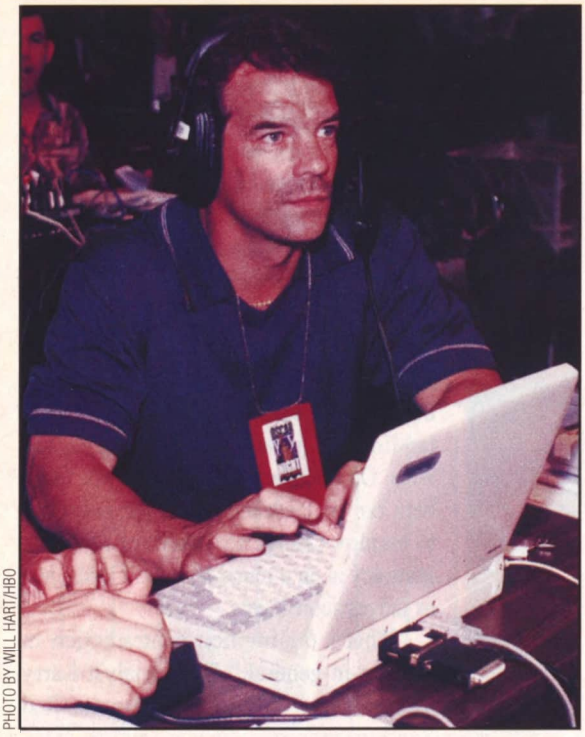


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

CompuBox co-founder Bob Canobbio works the keyboard during a fight. Canobbio urges boxing fans to bear in mind that punch stats are quantitative, not qualitative, and should not be relied upon to always indicate who deserves to win a fight.

rounds, threw more punches in 11 of 12 rounds, threw more powerpunches in 10 of 12 rounds, and landed more powerpunches in seven of 12 rounds (with three for Mosley and two even) ... yet even Canobbio acknowledges that there's an argument in favor of Mosley.

"The program is a quantitative, not a qualitative, baromoter of a fighter's activity," Canobbio stressed. "We've always said, from Day One, that there is a two percent margin of error. We never said it was the be-all, end-all. The be-all and end-all would be if we could count the number of punches and the force of the punches. We're looking for other technology that could, maybe, measure the force of the punch. But it would be difficult to convince the commissions, and even the fighters, to put sensors in the gloves. That would be the missing link to the program."

Program—that is what one always must remember about CompuBox. It is a computer program, operated manually by two men, sitting side by side, sharing the same computer, with one operator assigned to each fighter. One uses the A-S-Z-X keys on the standard laptop keyboard; the other uses four keys on an accountant's keypad plugged into the side of the computer. The keys correspond to the four statistics CompuBox tracks, and which appear on dozens of televised graphics each year: jab landed, jab missed, powerpunch landed, powerpunch missed.

If an operator happens to hit an incorrect key, "there's a way to even it out, by simply hitting a different key the next time," Canobbio said. "But there are only four keys. It doesn't happen often. It's like any other thing you do over and over. It becomes second nature."

Five operators rotate to cover the shows—Canobbio, former UPI boxing writers Joe Carnicelli and Dave Raffo, former junior featherweight fighter Saul Avelar, and two-time former junior lightweight titleholder Genaro Hernandez.

One of the program's obvious weaknesses is having both operators get just one angle on the fight.

"Different guys see different things, and a lot of that is dependent on what angle you had at any given time," said Las Vegas judge Jerry Roth. "That's exactly why we have three judges watching the fight from three different angles."

Roth judged Paulie Ayala's controversial split decision over Clarence "Bones" Adams in 2001. CompuBox gave advantages to Adams in total punches landed (230-157), total thrown (816-761), powerpunches landed (193-139) and jabs landed (37-18). But Roth scored 115-112 for Ayala, in agreement with Dave Moretti's 114-113, while Duane Ford had it 114-113 for Adams.

In the aftermath of De La Hoya-Mosley, at least one national sports radio show suggested that judges should have access to CompuBox statistics while scoring fights.

"We hand our scorecards in at the end of every round," Roth said. "Should we extend the round break so we can analyze the punch statistics first? Of course not. It's very subjective, what we do, and it should not be changed.

"I'll see in the newspaper sometimes that one guy landed 100 more punches than the other guy. But that doesn't mean anything. It depends on when those punches landed (by rounds), and on the severity of those punches, compared to the other guy's punches. And you can't base it solely on powerpunches, either. I've read before that two jabs should be considered equal to one powerpunch. But then I think back to a guy like Larry Holmes, who had a terrific jab. Should that rule apply to him too?"

It clearly didn't in another fight Roth scored, Floyd Mayweather-Jose Luis Castillo I in 2002. CompuBox had Castillo outlanding Mayweather 203-158. But in jabs, Mayweather enjoyed a 3-to-1 ratio (91-30), and an 11-0-1 edge by rounds. In powerpunches, the formula was almost exactly reversed in favor of Castillo (173-67 landed, 10-1-1 by rounds).

When the scorecards were tallied, all three judges sided with Mayweather by sizeable advantages, deeming that the boxer was more effective with his formula than the puncher was with his. Roth and John Keane had it 115-111. Anek Hongtongkam—one of the three judges in agreement for Mosley in the De La Hoya rematch—scored 116-111 for Mayweather.

Mayweather sat ringside for Mosley-De La Hoya II, and was adamant that De La Hoya won. But what rankled him more was his perception that ringside media who largely backed the decision for Mosley had decried his win over Castillo. In an immediate rematch with Castillo, Mayweather had better success on CompuBox, with edges in total punches landed (162-137), jabs landed (88-36), jabs landed by rounds (12-0), and a much narrower power disadvantage (101-74 for Castillo, 6-4-2 by rounds). But the scorecards actually were closer in the rematch.

"What's messed up to me is when I beat Castillo the first time, I won a unanimous decision, and everyone dropped me in the pound-for-pound ratings," Mayweather said. "Mosley got totally dominated, and now I'm reading stuff about how he earned it, and how he did enough to convince the judges. I obviously did enough to convince the judges too. But I didn't hear any of that after I beat Castillo the first time."

Erik Morales' 2001 victory over Guty Espadas came under a similar statistical discrepancy. Espadas outlanded Morales

The debate between jabs and powerpunches gets hazy when it comes to a fighter like Larry Holmes, pictured jolting Renaldo Snipes with his famous lead left. Holmes was known for having a jab as hurtful as a lot of heavyweights' best right hands.

220-158, but the decision was unanimous for Morales.

Such is the danger in reading CompuBox statistics and assuming they are in accord with the judges' scoring criteria, said Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

"When you look at cumulative punches in any fight, if one fighter throws 600 punches in the first six rounds, and only 200 in the next six rounds, the fact that he threw 800 punches still doesn't mean he won. Raw punch statistics remind me of when I worked in radio. I could look at the ratings, but was never quite sure what they meant," Ratner said.

Canobbio was a researcher at *Sports Illustrated* in the early-1980s, working in the same Time-Life building as HBO. He left *SI* to become a boxing editor at a new database company, which quickly failed. But while there, Canobbio and Logan Hobson, who co-founded CompuBox before leaving the company last year, encountered a tennis computer program designed to quantify different types of shots for statistical analysis.

They designed a similar program for boxing, used Canobbio's contacts with HBO to get in the door, and in 1985 tracked their first fight, and their only 15-rounder—Livingstone Bramble-Ray Mancini II.

The business surged from there, partly because a statistical application for boxing was a bright new concept, and partly because the company was formed during a significant period in fistic history.

"Right off the bat, we had Leonard and Hearns and Hagler and Duran," Canobbio said. "We had Larry Holmes, Julio Cesar Chavez, Milton McCrory, Mike McCallum. And then Tyson came along. They were big fights, big events, and we got thrown right in there."

The company's third fight was the 1985 Marvin Hagler-Thomas Hearns war. After the first round, Canobbio, who was tracking Hagler, recalls looking at his computer screen, and seeing that Hagler had thrown 81 punches, and not one jab.

Over the years, CompuBox has created a database of about 4,000 fighters, so those oddities are easier to measure. When Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward combined to land an astounding 110 powerpunches in the ninth round of their first fight, Canobbio was able to quickly pass along to HBO's announcers that the onslaught was triple the average. Not coincidentally, that was the 2002 Round of the Year.

CompuBox also has been retained for scouting purposes. Emanuel Steward has hired the company to statistically track both Lennox Lewis and the heavyweight champion's opposition. Even when the technology was still relatively new, Ray Leonard hired the company to scout his April 6, 1987, fight with Hagler.

"There was some self-doubt there with Ray, after three years off, and jumping in the ring with Hagler," Canobbio recalled. "We went to his training camp early, in

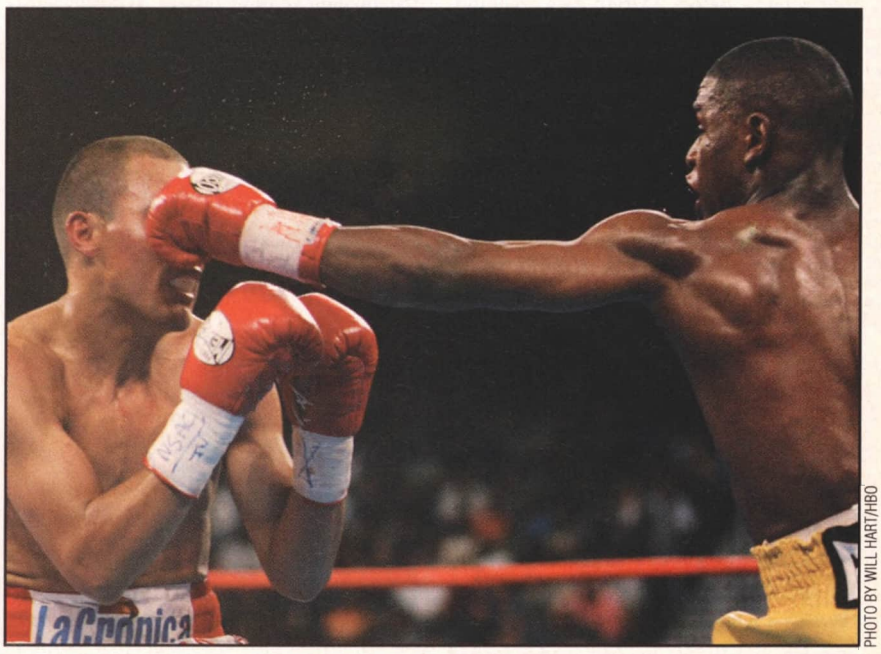


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

In his first fight with Jose Luis Castillo, Floyd Mayweather's jab carried him to a unanimous decision, but "Pretty Boy" was left stinging by critics who felt he was given a gift. At least Mayweather went home with a win, unlike the similarly jab-happy De La Hoya.

The first bout ever tracked by CompuBox was the February 1985 rematch between Livingstone Bramble and Ray Mancini. It remains the only 15-rounder CompuBox has covered live.

January, and tracked his sparring. Then we went back again in early-March to see if there was any change in his output.

"More importantly, we did a scouting report on Hagler, and found that Hagler was a slow starter. We had eight or 10 of his fights, and broke down his punch output. We discovered that his punch output was very low early in fights, then gradually started to build. Our suggestion to Ray was to start fast, and try to win the first four rounds, before Marvin gets cranking. First round, sure enough, Marvin came out in a righty stance, and I think he threw 16 punches in the round. He followed Ray around the ring, and Ray took advantage of that."

One week after Mosley-De La Hoya II, and on the opposite end of the country, Byrd won a unanimous decision over Oquendo. CompuBox and HBO's announcers differed with the judges again. Oquendo had narrow edges in total punches landed (156-132) and thrown (486-484). Round-by-round, Oquendo had an 8-3-1 edge in punches landed, and 7-3-2 in punches thrown.

Joe Byrd, who trains his son, suggested that Chris' dreadlocks might have duped the operators.

"Even when Chris blocked a punch, the sweat would fly off his hair, and it looked like he got hit," Byrd said. "That's why you won't see Chris wearing dreadlocks again."

The elder Byrd, who also coached the 1992 U.S. Olympic team, likened CompuBox to the amateur computer scoring system.

"When I coached the Olympic team, I found that it's very difficult for any man to accurately hit the computer key, every time a punch lands, within one second," he said. "And that's just hitting one key. This is hitting four keys."

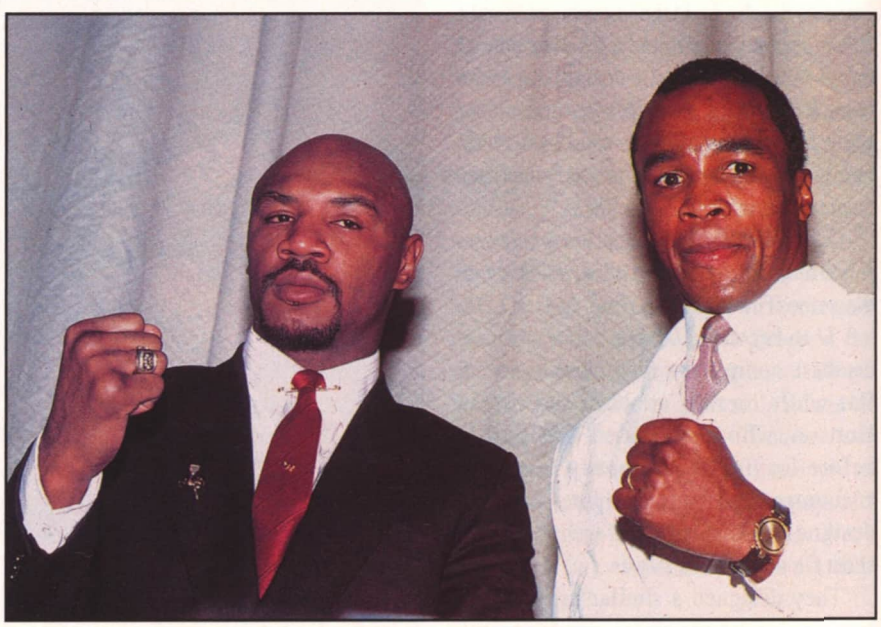
Canobbio bristles at the comparison to the amateur scoring system, as well as criticisms generated by Mosley-De La Hoya II.

"This fight, in particular, bothered me, because I felt like after 18 years I had to go back to square one and explain that this is a quantitative analysis, not a qualitative analysis," he said. "That made me more angry than anything. And a lot of the people who have taken shots at us don't know how the program works. They don't know if it's a computer doing it, if it's two guys, if it's one guy, if it's like the amateurs where each judge tries to track both fighters—they simply don't know. That's a little troublesome. I've just decided to take the high road. Eighteen years in this business speaks for itself."

So does the effectiveness of statistics in general, one might argue.

"In a sense," said HBO's Merchant, "punch statistics are like political polls. Political polls are remarkably accurate when it gets close to an election. But they are not 100 percent accurate. In 90 to 95 percent of all fights, the fighter who throws the most punches, and lands the most punches, also wins the fight. This just happened to be a case when De La Hoya had a clear statistical edge, but Mosley won the fight. It was one of the small percentage of fights when the statistics didn't track the winner." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.



For his 1987 superfight with Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Ray Leonard used the assistance of punch counters in his training. They tracked Sugar Ray's activity in sparring and also studied tapes of Hagler, helping Leonard formulate his successful game plan.

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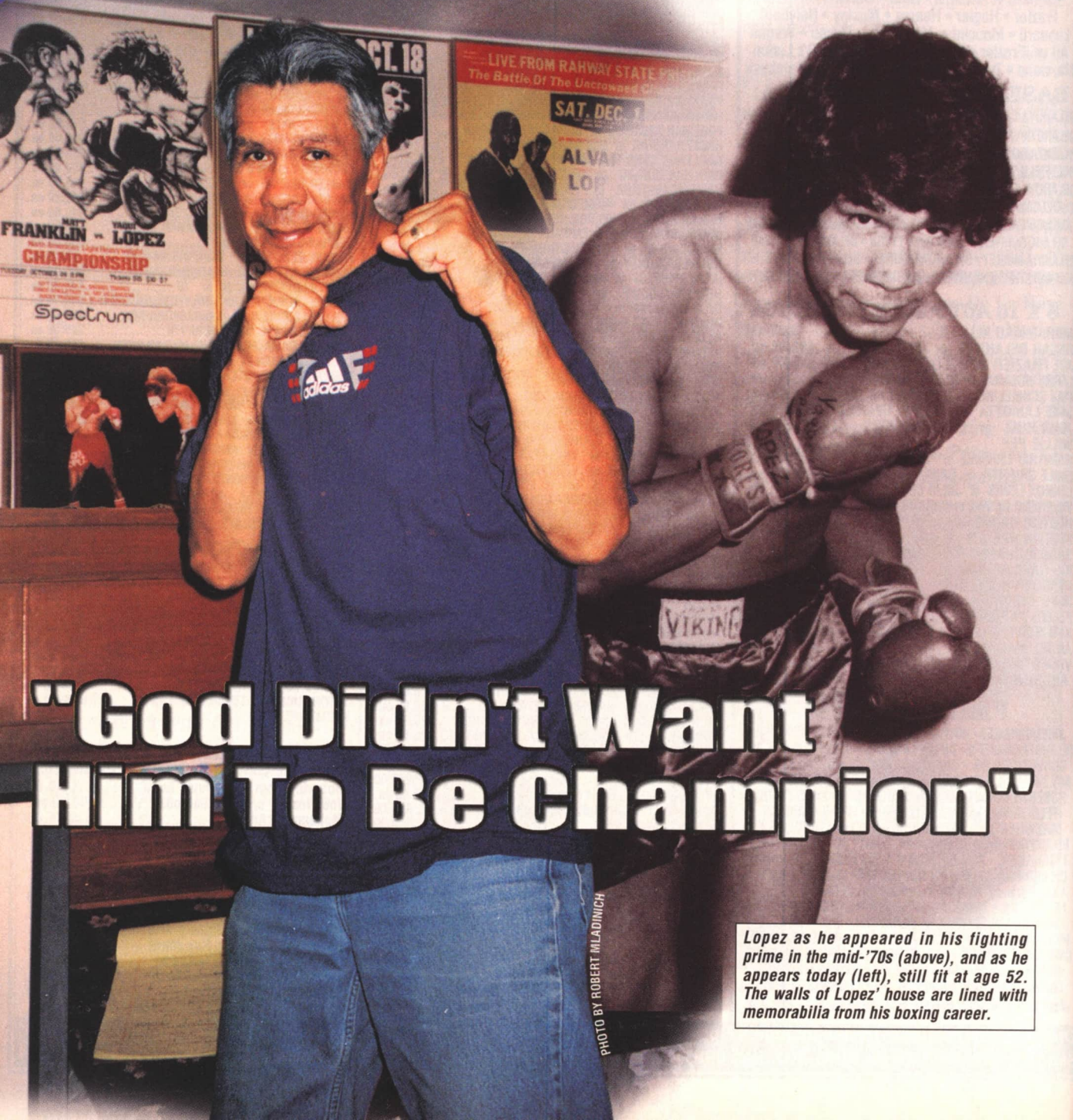


"God Didn't Want Him To Be Champion"

PHOTO BY ROBERT MLADINICH

Lopez as he appeared in his fighting prime in the mid-'70s (above), and as he appears today (left), still fit at age 52. The walls of Lopez' house are lined with memorabilia from his boxing career.

By Robert Mladinich

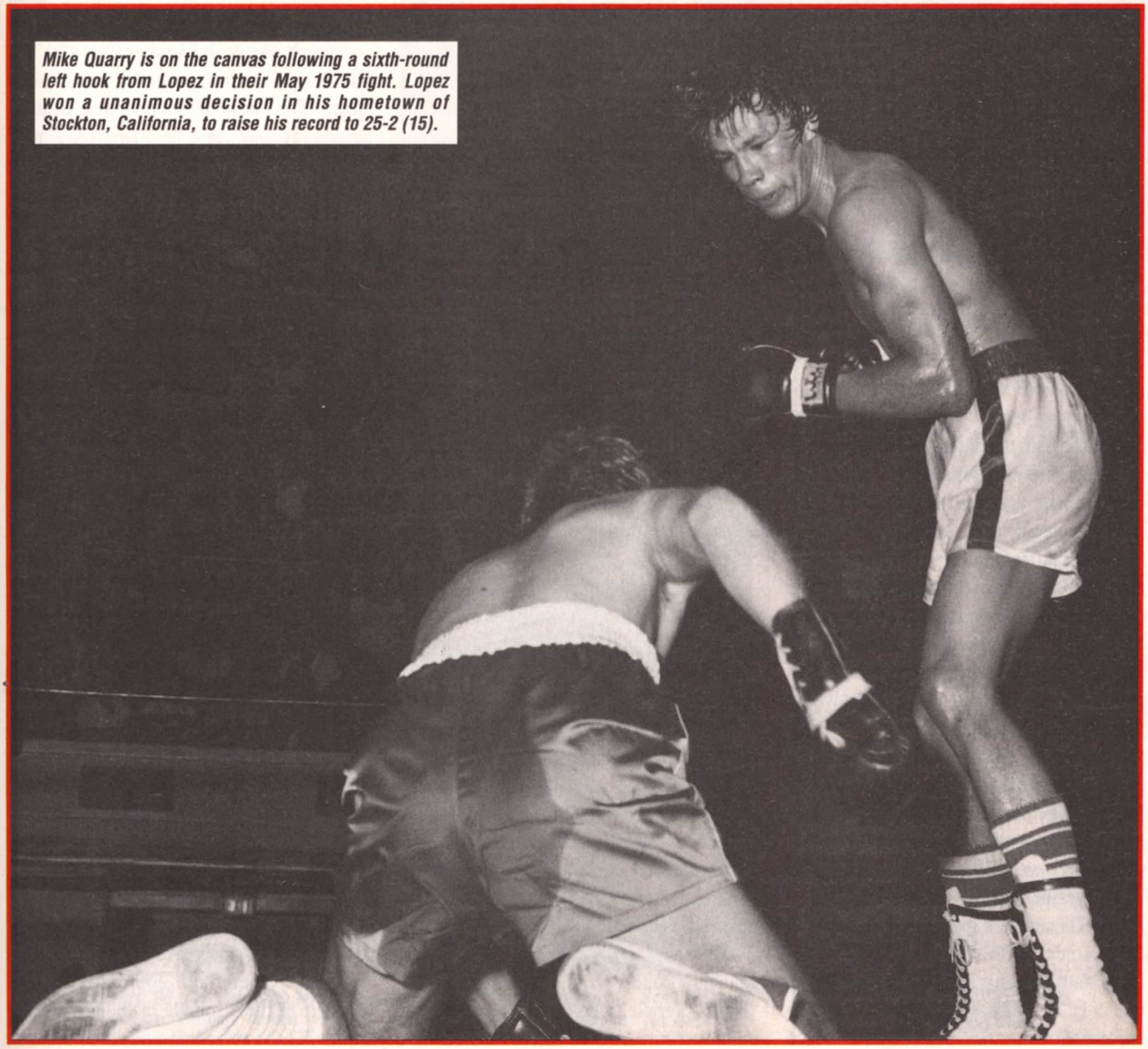
Almost every boxing fan that meets longtime light heavyweight contender Alvaro "Yaqui" Lopez tells him that he was one of their favorite fighters during the golden age of the 1970s and early-'80s. Although Lopez admits that he never tires of hearing it, he is much too humble and modest to outwardly acknowledge it. Usually he just looks earnestly into their eyes and thanks them for not forgetting him.

His still handsome visage took countless stitches during an illustrious 12-year career that saw him square off against such championship-level opponents as John Conteh, Victor Galindez (twice), Mike Rossman, Matthew Saad Muhammad (twice), Michael Spinks, S.T. Gordon, and Carlos DeLeon. With a heart as big as Micky Ward's or Arturo Gatti's, Lopez was one of the most popular fighters of his, or any, era.

"Everybody Albert fought was a somebody," said Jack Cruz, Lopez' father-in-law and longtime manager, who still calls him by the Americanized version of his name. "He was never in a fight that wasn't exciting. Even Archie Moore said Albert was one of his favorite fighters."

Growing up in Zacatecas, Mexico, Lopez, now 52, dreamed of being a bullfighter, but saw those ambitions dashed when his right leg was gored by a bull at the age of 12. His leg is still severely scarred with what looks like shrapnel wounds. Lopez' family then moved to the city of Stockton, in California's Central Valley, where they found seasonal work picking cherries, peaches, tomatoes, and onions for 10 to 12 hours a day. Lopez only attended school for about six months before dropping out prior to completing 10th grade. After working in the fields, and later in a local cannery, the teenage Lopez had relegated himself to a humdrum life until he met a lovely girl named Beatrice. When he learned that her father was a boxing promoter, he urged her to introduce them to each other. If he couldn't be a bullfighter, he figured being a boxer would suffice.

"I remember thinking that at 6'2", he was tall for a Mexican," said the gregarious Cruz, a lifelong Stockton resident who is of Irish and Mexican descent. "But



Mike Quarry is on the canvas following a sixth-round left hook from Lopez in their May 1975 fight. Lopez won a unanimous decision in his hometown of Stockton, California, to raise his record to 25-2 (15).

Lopez sticks future light heavyweight titlist Mike Rossman with a jab in their March '78 encounter, which Lopez won by sixth-round kayo. The victory earned Lopez a shot at WBA beltholder Victor Galindez two months later, but as in his other four title tries, Lopez came up short.

Albert was so green, the first time I put him in a ring he was walking around looking for the gate to get out."

In his first amateur bout, Lopez was matched with a veteran of over 100 fights and, quite predictably, lost. It took place in Eureka, California, where the raucous crowd consisted of hundreds of Native Americans from a nearby reservation. When Cruz was asked what tribe Lopez belonged to, the first word that came to mind was "Yaqui." He has been known by that moniker ever since.

In the early going, Lopez learned how to fight the hard way. Cruz even had to tie his feet together to get him used to footwork. Lopez would often report to work at the cannery wearing sunglasses to hide the black eyes he regularly incurred at the late Danny Dagampat's gym. But Lopez was a quick study. Within months he was winning, and winning handily. Although he had only 16 sanctioned amateur bouts, he had scores more in a nearby prison where Cruz would take him to fight in smokers against the inmates. By 1971, when Lopez was only 19 years old, he married Beatrice. And in April 1972, under her father's tutelage, he turned professional by beating Herman Hampton over six rounds in Stockton.

In losing an eight-round decision to the always-dangerous Jesse Burnett in his fourth pro fight, Lopez learned an invaluable lesson. "We fought four times, and every one of them was a war," said Lopez, who considers Burnett tougher than any of the world champions he faced. "In the first fight, my man [Cruz] is saying, 'Go get him, Champ, he's tired.' And I said, 'Hey, Jack, I'm tired too.'" If nothing else, Lopez realized the value of roadwork and soon began running a minimum of eight miles on weekdays and 11 on weekends.

Moreover, after finishing work at the cannery, Lopez, Cruz, co-trainer Angelo "Hank" Pericle, who calls himself Stockton's "poor man's Lou Duva," and onetime bantamweight contender Benny Casing would make the long drive to Allan Moore's Gym in Oakland for sparring. Among the fighters training there was a young George Foreman, whom Cruz recalled "used to put his fist through the bag."

Less than a year after turning pro, Lopez was fighting main events throughout northern California and beyond. He split a pair of 10-rounders with the rugged Al Bolden in Seattle and Portland. In the Portland fight, they knocked each other down three times apiece. Afterward, recalled Cruz, "I went around the ring and picked up all the money that was thrown in. The $750 [each] that they made was more than their $500 purses."

In another early bout, against the more experienced Van Sahib in Eugene, Oregon, many people expected Lopez to lose.

"Sahib was built like a gorilla, with big muscles and hair all over his body," said Cruz. "We knew he would come rushing across the ring, and he was strong, real strong. We told Albert, just stand up for a round and we'll tell you how to beat him. In the second round, Albert waited for the charge, sidestepped him, and knocked him out."

"With Yaqui, attitude was everything," said Pericle, who in his younger days bore a striking resemblance to the Paulie Walnuts character on *The Sopranos*. "He was as tough mentally as he was physically. It was obvious that he would make his mark. And he did, even though he never won a title."

After beating such stalwart contenders as Willie Warren, Mike Quarry, Canadian champion Gary Summerhays, and Burnett, Lopez challenged Conteh for the WBC 175-pound title in Copenhagen, Denmark, in October 1976. Arriving just three days before the fight, he was suffering from jet lag, but Cruz still believes he did enough to beat the champ. "Albert hit him with a bodyshot, and the ref picked Conteh off the floor," he said. "Then the ref gave an eight-count, even though the eight-count had been waived." Conteh captured a split decision.

Rebounding quickly, Lopez rattled off five knockout victories, and then was stopped by perennial contender Lonnie Bennett in three rounds in Indianapolis in April '77. More memorable than the loss

was the fact that Lopez got stiffed for $6,500 of his $7,500 purse. A few months later, he and Pericle saw the promoter, who later served jail time for tax evasion, in a Lake Tahoe hotel elevator. He was wearing gold chains, which Pericle urged Lopez to snatch as payment on the debt. "He grabbed the chains, and the two big bodyguards went to make a move, but thought better of it," said Pericle. "The promoter didn't say a word. How could he?"

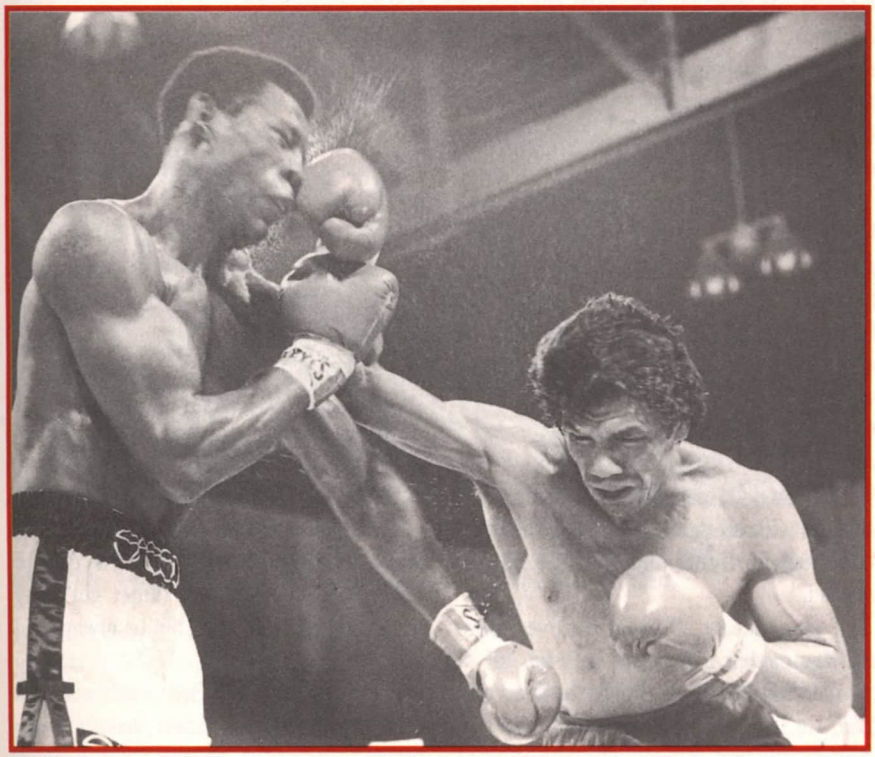
Four fights later, Lopez lost a heartbreakingly close decision to WBA titlist Galindez in Rome. He rebounded with three quick victories, then slaughtered number-one contender Rossman in six rounds in New York's Madison Square Garden. Two months later, he lost another questionable decision to Galindez, this time in Via Reggio, Italy. At the weigh-in, Galindez was glaring at Lopez, who showed up a few minutes late. The good-natured Lopez stared back and said, "Don't get mad at me yet; wait until we get into the ring." Although Galindez was known for wearing a perpetual scowl, he broke out laughing.

Less than two months later, Lopez beat old rival Burnett over 12 rounds, then engaged in the first of two epic battles with Saad Muhammad (still known as Matthew Franklin at the time), this one for the NABF title in Saad's hometown of Philadelphia. Although Lopez was stopped in 11 rounds, the fight will always be remembered for its ferocity.

By the time they fought again 21 months later, Saad had not only changed his name, he had also won the WBC title. Lopez hit Saad Muhammad with more than 20 unanswered punches in an astounding eighth round, and looked well on his way to finally winning a well-deserved title. But somehow the champion managed to stay on his feet, and came back to stop Lopez in the 14th round of THE RING's 1980 Fight of the Year. "He got his second wind and I didn't," said Lopez.

However, Pericle takes full responsibility for that loss. He says he abided by the rule that prohibited smelling salts from being used during the bout.

"I didn't use them, thinking I was doing the right thing," he explained. "But people kept telling me that Saad's head was jolting up and down between rounds. When we looked on the floor in his corner after the fight, there were capsules everywhere. If I had used the salts, Yaqui would've gotten his second wind and been light heavyweight champion of the world."



In his classic July '80 title fight with Hall of Famer Matthew Saad Muhammad, Lopez did more than his fair share of damage before falling by dramatic 14th-round stoppage. The back-and-forth war was named Fight of the Year by THE RING.

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PHOTO BY ROBERT MLADINICH

Lopez in his home with his wife of 32 years, Beatrice, and their dog, Snowball. The Lopezes also have two sons, Alvaro and Yaqui, both of whom are in their 20s.

Three months later, in October '80, Lopez was stopped in seven rounds by Spinks, who told him he had never been hit harder in the body by anyone else. "Then why didn't you go down?" Lopez asked him.

Fighting on until September '84, Lopez beat several lower tier heavyweights, including 237-pound Mike Jameson, but also lost a WBC cruiserweight title fight to DeLeon. Retiring with a record of 63-15 (40), he has no regrets, even though had he been born a decade or two later, he'd most certainly have at least one alphabet belt and perhaps some multimillion-dollar purses. His highest purse was $50,000 for the second Saad Muhammad fight.

"We live in a different era today," said Lopez, who is still a very fit 194 pounds. "The fighters today are not the same caliber as they were in the '60s and '70s. They were real good, and took nothing for granted. You couldn't sneak your way into a title shot back then. You had to earn it."

His wife is still his biggest fan, and is quick to back him up on that assessment.

"A lot of people don't realize just how talented Yaqui was," she explained. "He was like a ballet dancer in the ring. People remember all the blood, but that was because his skin cut so easily. He looked liked he was hit hard, but he rolled with most of the punches and they slid across his neck. He slipped a lot more punches than he took, against many great fighters at their peaks. All you have to do is listen to him today to see that he didn't take too many head beatings."

Indeed, Lopez is extremely erudite and has a memory that is downright photographic. He remembers minute details from each and every fight, and is constantly correcting his 81-year-old father-in-law and the 78-year-old Pericle on the specifics of his bouts. Not the least bit surprised is Cruz, who said, "Albert could have been a doctor if he chose. He's brilliant. He learned English by himself. To be as sharp as he is with all the fights he had, imagine if he had no fights and went to college instead."

Today, nearly 20 years removed from his ring career, Lopez not only has all of his marbles, he still possesses the heart of a lion. He lives with his wife and two sons, Yaqui, 25, and Alvaro, 22—neither of whom ever showed any propensity for boxing—across the street from the widowed and ailing Cruz. Lopez spends several hours a day with Cruz, playing dominoes, chitchatting, cleaning, cooking, and rigidly enforcing Cruz' daily medicinal schedule.

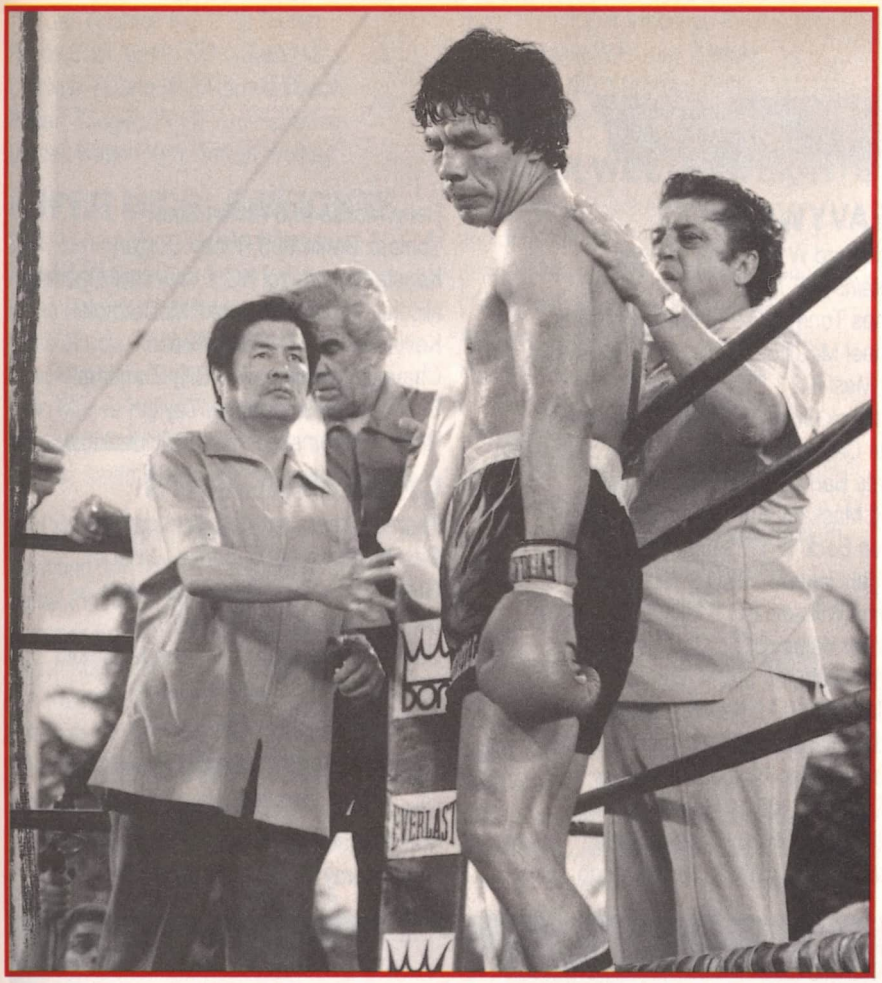
Surprisingly, the worst injuries of Lopez' life did not occur in either the bull ring or the boxing ring. After retiring from boxing, he worked for a private sanitation company hurling barrels of trash into the back of a truck. Nine years later, he was forced to leave that vocation after severely injuring his back. Now, 10 years and five surgeries later, he is still in constant pain, but refuses to take prescribed painkillers and stays healthy by walking two to three miles a day, doing an abundance of laborious stretching exercises, and maintaining a sound diet.

In many ways, Lopez the fighter is as much of an anachronism as Stockton the city is to old-timers like Cruz and Pericle. They remember it as a Wild West frontier town where rules were most often flouted and the only law of the land seemed to be lawlessness. The fabled Skid Row that was so well-chronicled in the classic film *Fat City* is gone, as are the scores of labor camps, gambling dens, bootleg fight venues, transient hotels, brothels, and pool halls with names like the Bataan Pool House, in deference to the large Filipino population, and Daddy Blacks. Gone too are fighters like Lopez, who brought immeasurable pride and dignity to a city that was often maligned by the press for being, proportionately speaking, one of the most violent in the nation.

The way Beatrice sees it, her husband did as much for Stockton by the way he fought as the way he lived and the way he exited such a brutal vocation.

"Yaqui did everything so gracefully," she said. "So many times, big time promoters tried to steal him away from my father. But loyalty was so important to him, he wouldn't go. When he fought, he gave it all. He had too much respect for the sport, and his fans, not to. And when he quit, he never looked back. My father got many offers for him to return, but he always said no.

"For some reason God didn't want him to be a champion, it just wasn't in the books," she added. "Yaqui loved fighting, but always said the family had more fun than he did during his career. I'm sure he's



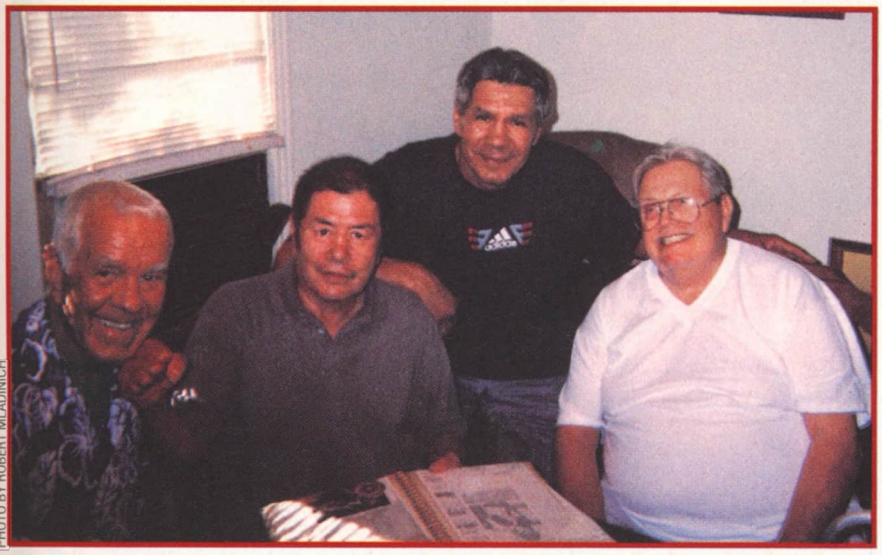


PHOTO BY ROBERT MLADINICH

Lopez is consoled by his cornermen (top) following his 1983 loss to Carlos DeLeon in what would be Lopez' second-to-last fight. Today (above), those same cornermen are still a part of the ex-fighter's life, including (from left) Hank Pericle, Benny Casing, and Jack Cruz.

right. I remember busloads of people going to watch him fight. The Hell's Angels would be in the back, the drinkers in the middle, and the quiet old people in the front. They would all be eating my mother's tamales. Life is nothing but memories, and we have so many. Not a day goes by that we don't thank the Lord for all we have to be grateful for." ■

Robert Mladinich is a freelance writer living in New York and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Chris Byrd W 12 Fres Oquendo
(Retains IBF Title)
James Toney KO 9 Evander Holyfield
Jameel McCline KO 10 Cedric Boswell
Joe Mesi KO 1 DaVarryl Williamson
Dominick Guinn W 10 Duncan Dokiwari
Juan Carlos Gomez W 10 Sinan Samil Sam
Monte Barrett KO 10 Eric Kirkland
Oleg Maskaev KO 1 Dennis McKinney
Owen Beck W 12 George Arias
Sergei Liakhovich KO 8 James Walton
Danny Williams KO 5 Michael Sprott
Nicolay Valuev KO 1 Otis Tisdale
Herbie Hide KO 5 Alex Vassiliev
Attila Levin KO 2 Kenny Craven
Audley Harrison KO 4 Lisandro Diaz
Samuel Peter KO 2 Jason Farley
Colin Wilson KO 10 Roger Izonritei
Matt Skelton KO 6 Michael Holden
Andreas Sidon W 12 Chris Sirengo
Rene Monse W 8 Adnan Serin
Tomasz Bonin W 6 Robert Sulgan
Konstantin Onofrei KO 1 Krzysztof Ogonek
Nicolay Popov KO 2 John McDermott
Kevin Montiy KO 1 Matt Green
Chauncey Welliver W 8 Billy Zumbrun
B.J. Flores KO 2 Gabriel Taylor
Richard Odoms KO 1 Dominic Jenkins

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Thomas Hansvoll W 12 Damon Reed
Daniel Rowsell KO 4 Jamie Wallace
Greg Wright KO 2 Rayco Saunders
Damon Reed KO 3 Vance Winn
Steve Cunningham W 8 Terry McGroom
David Haye KO 4 Lolenga Mock
Hearn Marler W 6 Angel Herrara

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Charles Brewer KO 5 Freeman Barr
Manny Siaca KO 4 Demetrius Jenkins
Hugo Garay W 12 Peter Venancio

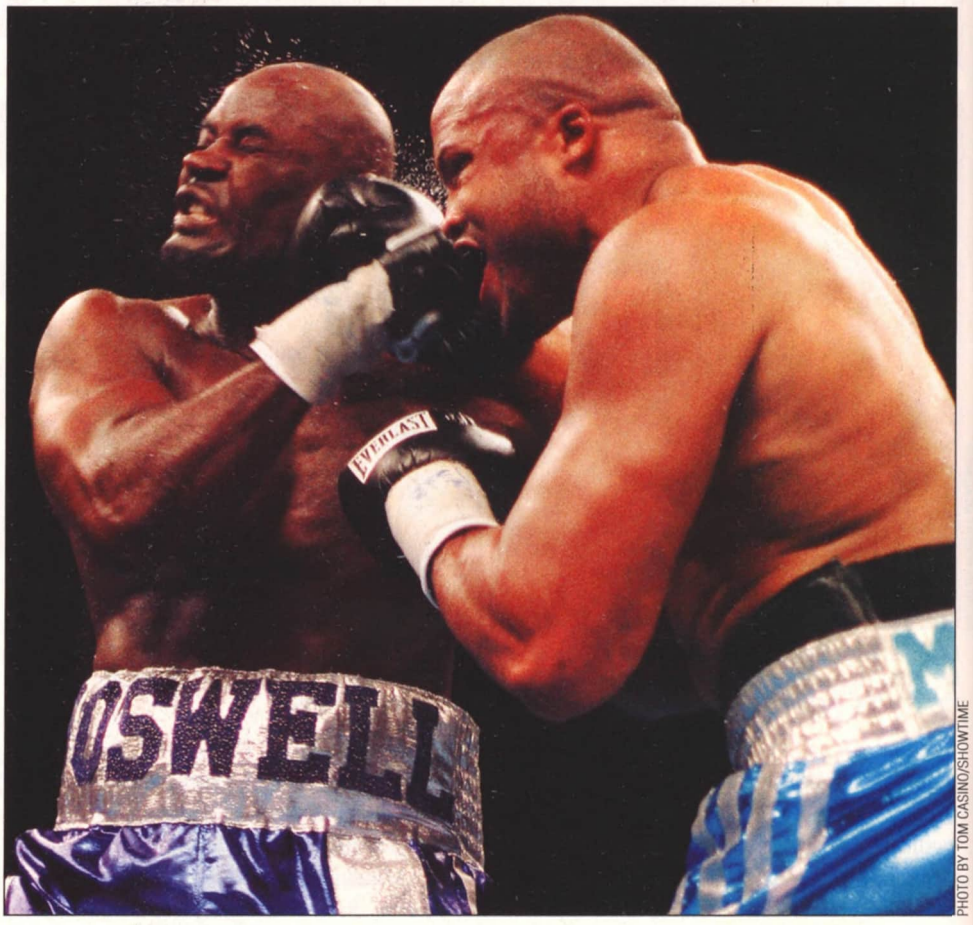

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Heavyweight contender Jameel McCline blasts Cedric Boswell with a right hand

Tomasz Adamek KO 2 Ed Dalton
Prince Badi Ajamu KO 6 Sam Hill
Carmine Tufano W 8 Ronald Boddie
Robert Stieglitz W 10 Yuri Barashan
Darnell Wilson W 8 Darren Whitley

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Mads Larsen W 12 Danilo Haussler
Armand Krajnc KO 2 Peter Zsilak
Robin Reid KO 6 Willard Lewis
Kirino Garcia W 10 Derrick Whitley
Mger Mkrtchyan KO 3 Balaz Dzhozev
Brian Magee KO 1 Omar Gonzalez
Andrew Council W 8 James McAllister
Quentin Smith KO 3 Floyd Williams

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Raymond Joval W 12 Lansana Diallo
Rafael Pineda W 10 Tybius Flowers
Aslanbek Kodzoev KO 2 Charles Clark
Mpush Makambi KO 4 Said Yazidu
R.J. Karsten KO 8 Max Heyman
Nobuhiro Ishida W 10 Akira Ohigashi
Mariano Carrera W 10 Juan Meza
Marcos Diaz KO 4 Jovenil Maciel
Daniel Edouard W 10 Miguel Espino
Cleveland Corder W 10 Joe Garcia
Reggie Strickland KO 5 Mike Stone
Clarence Taylor KO 2 Bear Sanders

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Alex Garcia KO 10 Rhoshii Wells
(Retains WBA Title)
Keith Holmes KO 8 Jason Papillion
Roman Karmazin KO 3 David Walker
Tokunbo Olajide KO 4 Emil Baku
Kuvanych Toygonbaev KO 2
Francisco Mendez
Shannan Taylor KO 11
Marcelo Rodriguez
Steve Martinez W 8 Frankie Sanchez
Farai Musiyiwa W 6 Mihaly Kotai
Rocky Martinez W 6 Verdell Smith
Darren Maciunski W 6 Leo Edwards
Ian MacKillop W 6 Daniel Mendez
Aslanbek Kodzoev KO 2 Charles Clark
Jesus Gonzales KO 1 Josh Peters

WELTERWEIGHTS

Jawaid Khaliq W 12 Maxim Nesterenko
Carlos Baldomir W 10 Edgar Ruiz
Jose Luis Cruz KO 5 Alejandro Jimenez
Andres Lujan KO 2 Paolo Roberto
Rev Santillan KO 8 Daigoro Yamamoto
Andre Eason W 10 Alberto Santiago
Jorge Paez W 10 Rodney Jones
Chucky T W 8 Adam Salas
Jimmy Lange KO 3 Homer Gibbins
Sven Paris KO 4 Vincenzo Finzi
Dimitry Salita W 6 Joey Bartole
Said Ouali KO 3 Michael Doaks
Ahmed Kaddour W 8 Wilmer Mejia

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Ricky Hatton KO 9 Aldo Rios
Junior Witter KO 2 Fred Kinuthia
Juan Valenzuela W 10 Eleazar Contreras
Carlos Maussa KO 6 Jeffrey Resto
Andreas Kotelnik KO 10 Arturo Urena
Rafal Jackiewicz KO 1 Allan Vester
Ernie Zavala W 10 Arturo Morua
Giuseppe Lauri W 6 Vasile Surcica
Daudy Bahari W 12 Kiatchai 13 Riantower
Oscar Diaz W 10 Rogelio Castaneda
Lucky Lewele KO 5 Barend van Rooyen
Rafael Ortiz D 8 Humberto Chavez
Jeff Fraza W 6 Kevin Watts
Wilmer Torres KO 2 Brian Paul
Ricardo Torres W 10 Facundo Tolosa

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Julien Lorcy KO 4 Mustapha Abahraoui
Mat Zegan KO 6 Laszlo Bognar
Jose Luis Juarez KO 7 Armando Bosques
Francisco Lorenzo W 10 Ubaldo Hernandez
Rolando Reyes W 10 Omar Bernal
Danny Hunt W 10 Chill John
Octavio Lara KO 1 Mike Hamon

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Carlos Hernandez Tech. Win 10 Steve Forbes
(Retains IBF Title)
Joel Casamayor KO 6 Diego Corrales
Erik Morales KO 3 Guty Espadas
Boris Sinitsin KO 10 Affif Djelti
Koba Gogoladze W 12 Manuel Sepeda
Mzonke Fana W 12 Elvis Makama
Alvin Brown KO 4 Chuck Dairy
Samuel Kebede KO 4 Bela Sandor
Nobuhito Honmo Tech. Draw 4
Tsuyoshi Nakamura
Mike Anchondo KO 4 Silverio Ortiz
Akinori Kanai KO 2 Boy Guevarra
Jason Litzau KO 3 Rodney Jones
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 4
Jonathan Hernandez

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Johnny Tapia W 10 Carlos Contreras
Chris John W 12 Oscar Leon
Daniel Seda KO 10 Genaro Trazancos
Enrique Sanchez Tech. Draw 6
Jorge Martinez
Juan Carlos Ramirez W 12 Hector Marquez
Jorge Solis W 12 Jose Luis Tula
Ismael Gonzalez W 12 Armando Hernandez
Danny Flores W 8 Ricardo Medina
Al Seeger KO 5 Antonio Smith
Martin Honorio W 8 John Nolasco
Bernard Dunne KO 1 Julio Cesar Oyuela
Jorge Linares KO 2 Joungkeun Woo

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Israel Vazquez KO 7 Trinidad Mendoza
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi W 10 Julio Cesar Avila
Ryuichi Minoriyama W 10 Michael Domingo
Steven Foster KO 4 Alexander Abramenko
Thomas Mashaba KO 7 Jeffrey Mathebula

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Rafael Marquez W 12 Mauricio Pastrana
(Retains IBF Title)
Veerapol Sahaprom D 12 Toshiaki Nishioka
(Retains WBC Title)
Cruz Carbajal KO 8 Gerardo Espinoza
Hideki Todaka W 12 Leo Gamez
Ricardo Vargas W 12 Roberto Bonilla
Gerson Guerrero KO 3 Alejandro Avendano
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 1 Jorge Reyes
Roger Gonzalez W 12 Samuel Lopez
Hugo Soto KO 7 Julio Medina
Nathan Sting W 12 Nicky Booth
Daniel Ponce DeLeon KO 3
Marcos Ballido
Simone Maludrottu KO 9 Emiliano Salvini
Jose Aguiniga W 6 Keyri Wong
Elena Reid W 6 Linda Tenberg

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Alexander Munoz W 12 Hidenobu Honda
(Retains WBA Title)
Yosam Choi KO 4 Jinho Kim
Malcolm Tunacao KO 5 Ringgo Jaguar
Jason Booth W 12 Lunga Ntontela
Julio Zarate KO 4 Cesar Ricardo Martinez
Ricardo Cordoba KO 3 Davis Arosemena

FLYWEIGHTS

Irene Pacheco KO 6 Damaen Kelly
(Retains IBF Title)
Mzukisi Sikali KO 4 Hawk Makepula
Jose Lopez W 12 Everardo Morales
Hussein Hussein W 8 Falzona Fidal
Vic Darchinyan KO 1 Edo Angorro
Cyril Bellanger KO 4 Taoufik Tabi
Araman De La Cruz W 12 Ernesto Rubillar
Carlos Bouchan KO 6 Ulises Cadena
Wladimir Sidorenko W 8 Alberto Ontiveros

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Roberto Vazquez KO 1
Eduardo Marquez

STRAWWEIGHTS

Daniel Reyes KO 6 Edgar Cardenas
(Wins IBF Title)

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The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Oscar De La Hoya was fuming. He promised to launch an investigation. He promised to get the best lawyers money could buy on the case. And yet there was no investigation. There was no formal protest of the decision. Why? Why would such a scandalous robbery not be worth following up on?

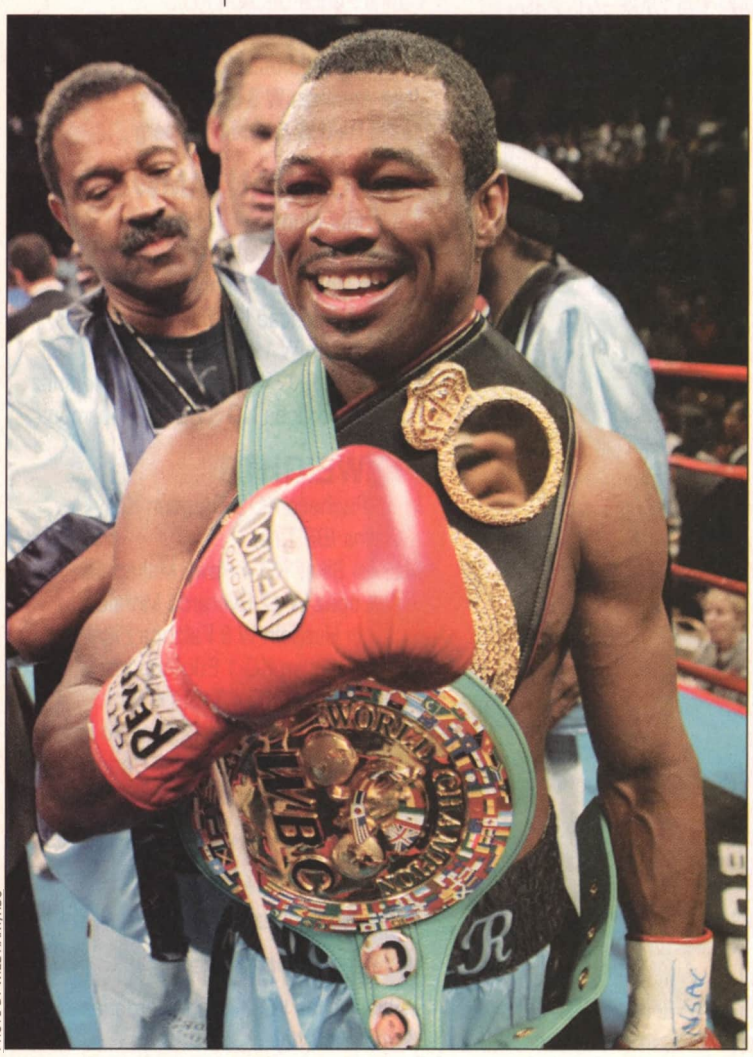


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Maybe because De La Hoya watched the tape and realized there was no scandalous robbery. This was just a close fight that didn't go his way, a fight that Sugar Shane Mosley had every bit as much right to win as De La Hoya did. And for Mosley to convince all three judges—sitting ringside with the best views in the house—that he won seven of the 12 rounds, that says something. It says that the handicappers who made him a 2½-1 underdog sold him short, and it says that Mosley, as such a clear-cut underdog, gave an impressive performance, regardless of how your own personal scorecard read.

After 20 months of not being called "champ," Mosley is back on top, having beaten boxing's "Golden Boy" twice now. In the biggest fight of 2003, Mosley rose up and delivered, making himself the world junior middleweight champion and the Fighter of the Month.

Shane Mosley

RINGSIDE REPORTS

PHOTO BY NICK PETROCCI

Byrd spears Oquendo with a jab en route to controversial win

Chris Byrd W 12 Fres Oquendo

Uncasville, Connecticut: As each round of his challenge of IBF beltholder Byrd passed us by, the name "Oquendo" began sounding a lot like "I Can Do." The Puerto Rican heavyweight was doing it, all right. He was doing exactly what the boxing world gave him little chance of pulling off. All night long, he was tricking the ultimate trickster.

Byrd, 33, the same slippery southpaw who toyed with the dangerous likes of Evander Holyfield and David Tua, hadn't a clue how to solve the Oquendo puzzle. Like the slot machines buzzing everywhere throughout the Mohegan Sun Casino, Byrd, too, felt as though he was being played, and it looked like his first title defense might also be his last.

From the outset, Oquendo's ploy was an obvious one. He would combat Byrd's unorthodox style with some unusual behavior of his own, befuddling the lefthander with unpredictable bursts of speed and power, all the while counterpunching the counterpuncher, making Byrd come to him.

The game plan took form as early as the first round, when Oquendo, 224, Chicago, Illinois, began to play possum with the smaller Byrd, 211, Flint, Michigan, luring the titlist into an unfamiliar role as the fight's aggressor. Although Byrd won the first round, the tactics began to work after that, as Oquendo lashed out repeatedly with quick combinations, often leading with sneaky rights, and firing successive shots from awkward angles.

His face marked with confusion, if not surprise, Byrd reverted to stalking Oquendo from one corner to the next in an attempt to thwart the upset bid. But when his hands weren't being tied up in a clinch, they were letting loose weak, pawing combinations that had little effect on the retreating Oquendo. Meanwhile, Oquendo, 30, continued to score with sharper, crisper punches that were being delivered with deceptive speed.

When a tiring Oquendo's mouth began to open in the 10th round, so did the window of opportunity for Byrd, who tried desperately to vindicate himself down the stretch. While Byrd certainly stole the final rounds with busier hands, he was also busy picking himself up off the canvas from a one-two, followed by a light push, that dropped him on his seat in the 12th round. Unlike the other three instances when Byrd went down in the fight, this one probably could have been ruled a knockdown, but referee Eddie Cotton (USA) merely declared it Byrd's fourth slip, depriving Oquendo, 24-2 (15), of a two-point round.

Unfortunately, even a 10-8 round in the 12th wouldn't have made up for the head-scratcher scoring of Donald Ackerman, Stephen Epstein, and John Lawson. In a close fight that a majority of ringsiders scored narrowly for Oquendo (THE RING had it a 114-114 draw thanks to Byrd's late surge), those three judges favored Byrd by tallies of 115-113, 116-112, and 117-111, respectively. The latter two scores were almost unimaginable, and the boos and chants of "Bulls___!" from the crowd were not a surprise.

And with that, Byrd, 37-2 (20), the sport's most elusive trickster, had somehow dodged the most threatening blow yet.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(9-20-03)

Ted Bodenrader

Alex Garcia KO 10 Rhoshii Wells

Uncasville, Connecticut: In the early-'90s, Alex Garcia was a highly touted contender in boxing's glamour division, now remembered mostly for his horizontal ring posture. Today, some 10 years later, the failed heavyweight's namesake is trying to turn things upright.

Some seven inches and 70 pounds behind the heavyweight of years past, this Garcia, at age 24, is certainly beginning to stand tall among the world's junior middleweight hopefuls.

On a September night at the Mohegan Sun Casino, however, the Mexican mauler was nearly knocked to his knees. It was Wells, the 1996 Olympic bronze medalist from Atlanta, Georgia, who nearly put him there, matching Garcia punch for punch, round for round, throughout most of the main supporting bout underneath the Chris Byrd-Fres Oquendo heavyweight clash. It was Garcia's first defense of the bogus, non-"super" version of the WBA super welterweight title.

The fight started with a serious bang when Wells popped Garcia with a flush right that awoke not only the 4,000-plus in attendance, but also the snoozing slugger from Tijuana.

Garcia, straight out of the young Marco Antonio Barrera mold, quickly regrouped and then tried to bait Wells into a heated slugfest that he expected would tilt things in his favor. However, it was Garcia himself who was snared by Wells' crafty style, as much of the fight took on a smooth, tactical tempo.

Wells, 154, poked away at Garcia with precision through most of the fight with a sharp jab, and seemed to rack up points with superior hand speed and ring generalship. However, the surgeon himself got slashed in the sixth round, as a scalping right by "Terra" Garcia opened a cut beside Wells' left eye. Garcia, 154, followed up with a hard overhand right in the seventh, then pushed his enemy to the canvas in what referee Frank Cappuccino (USA)

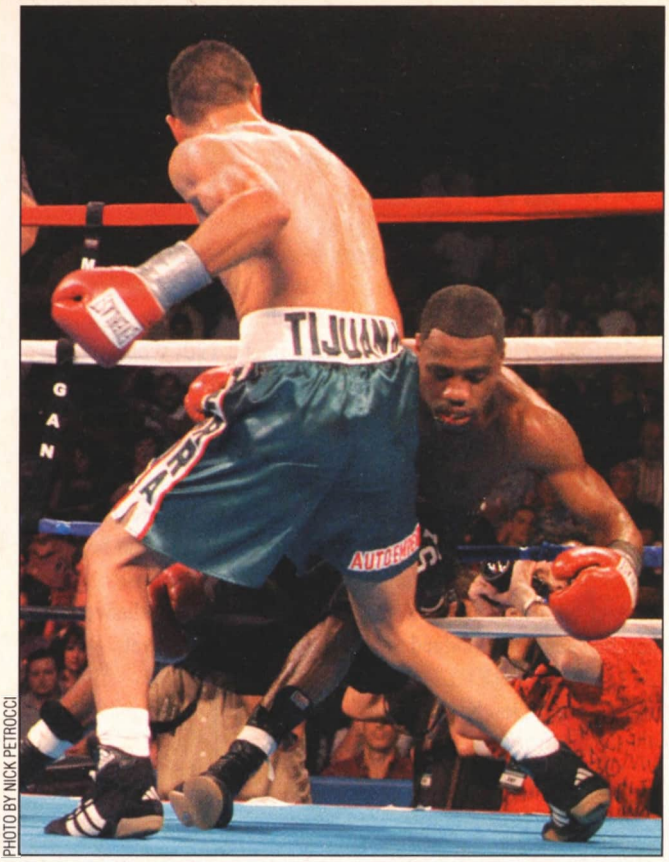


PHOTO BY NICK PETROCCI

Wells is felled by Garcia's power

swiftly nullified from being an official knockdown.

But three rounds later, in the waning seconds of the 10th, and with the fight nearly even, Garcia would make it count, as he unleashed a sizzling left-right-left combination to his opponent's skull.

"I told him to go out and attack him," said Roberto Sandoval, Garcia's trainer. "I knew he was a better puncher."

Wells, 26, collapsed from the power shower, and made it back to his feet just in time for the bell to cut short an ensuing attack.

Yet the knockdown was enough to raise Cappuccino's concern, and he examined Wells, 17-1-2 (10), closely as the fighter slouched on the stool. Cappuccino, on the advice of physician Anthony Allessi, made sure Wells stayed there, halting the bout before the 11th round could begin.

Across the ring, Alex Garcia, once again, was standing tall.

"I knew it was just a matter of time before I caught up with him," said Garcia, 22-0 (21). "But I promise next time, I'll do even better."

Promoter: Don King Productions

(9-20-03)

Ted Bodenrader

Sven Ottke W 12 Mads Larsen

Erfurt, Germany: Only the man in the opposite corner seems to change whenever Ottke fights. Everything else follows a familiar pattern. Once more Ottke, 167½, Germany, boxed his way methodically to a close decision, this one a disputed majority nod over Larsen, 168, Denmark, to retain the IBF and WBA super middleweight titles at Erfurter Messenhalle. It was his division-record 19th defense of the IBF belt and his second of the WBA version he claimed against Byron Mitchell.

The scoring was close, Denny Nelson (USA) and Pavel Kardiny (Poland) favoring the German by 115-113, and Raffaele Argiolas (Italy) scoring a draw, 114-114. THE RING scored for Ottke, 115-114. But the Danish fighter's camp was convinced that Larsen was the victim of larceny.

"I made the fight and I felt Ottke was too defensive," said Larsen 44-2 (37). "He didn't do enough. I felt I won. I chased him all over the ring. I should have run the Berlin marathon. He must give me a rematch."

But Ottke, 32-0 (6), has different plans for the last couple of fights of his remarkable career—after first climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya, where he was headed shortly after this win.

Ottke had left himself with something of a hill to climb, too, after the opening few rounds against the Dane. He found his opponent's southpaw style difficult to counteract, and the challenger built up an early advantage. But the rounds were close. Not much scoring was done by either man. If Larsen felt that Ottke was not doing enough, it must be said that he was not exactly taking the ring by storm himself. Referee Pete Podgorski (USA) had little to do, as the boxers mainly kept the fight at a distance.

In the fifth round, Ottke finally landed a solid right to Larsen's head, the signal that he was at last getting to grips with his awkward foe. The bodyshots he had been throwing predominantly were perhaps beginning to take effect. Certainly, Larsen was slowed down in the sixth by a good combination from the German, but he responded well to back Ottke up in the eighth with a good left and right.

Down the stretch, Ottke did just enough. He never panicked, just picked away at Larsen's lead until he felt that it was overhauled. The IBF representative on site, Benedetto Montella of Italy, was unconvinced, however. "I will report this to the IBF office and urge that Ottke and Larsen fight a rematch to truly prove who the better man is," he said.

The fight to determine the best super middleweight fighter in the world would be Ottke against Welshman Joe Calzaghe, but the German shows no inclination to make this bout happen. He even turned down a $1-million offer from Calzaghe's promoter, Frank Warren, to take the fight in Germany.

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(9-6-03)

Brian Doogan

Juan Lazcano KO 11 Steve Johnston

Las Vegas, Nevada: Oozing strength and determination, Lazcano became the first to stop Johnston in a bittersweet affair that saw the downfall of an old favorite and the ascension of a new lightweight powerhouse.

Unlike Johnston's previous two defeats, both of which came via narrow decision, this was an emphatic beatdown. But before trainer George Durbin rescued him, "Li'l But Bad" fought his heart out in an attempt to overcome Lazcano's advantages in age, strength, and punching power. It was, in fact, the best action fight on the Shane Mosley-Oscar De La Hoya pay-per-view card at the MGM Grand, including the main event.

Lazcano, 135, El Paso, Texas, got off to a great start, swelling Johnston's left eye with the first jab he landed. His first right hand did even more damage, sending Johnston, 135, crashing down on the seat of his blue trunks. Seemingly more upset with himself than

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Lazcano feeds Johnston some leather along the ropes

hurt, Johnston pounded his glove on the canvas in frustration and then scrambled up well inside of American referee Kenny Bayless' count.

It was Johnston's turn to dish out the punishment in the second. Apparently fully recovered from his opening-round mishap, the Denver southpaw wobbled Lazcano early and then floored him with a sharp left to the head. It was an excellent comeback round, and also marked the first of several times Bayless warned Lazcano for punching low.

The third and the fourth were close, hard-fought rounds, with both connecting cleanly. All three judges gave Lazcano the third, Johnston the fourth.

After a relatively slow fifth for both men, Johnston got up on his toes in the sixth and boxed well enough on the outside to earn another sweep on the official scorecards. But Johnston's 30-year-old legs couldn't keep up the lateral movement, and in the seventh, "The Hispanic Causing Panic" pinned him on the ropes and raked him with hard shots, especially to the body. Lazcano forced Johnston into the ropes again in the eighth, where he snapped the veteran's head back with hurtful-looking punches.

After recharging his batteries in the ninth, Lazcano, 28, launched a determined drive to end the fight in the 10th round. He floored Johnston again with another right to the head, but was also penalized a point for belting his foe below the belt.

Lazcano lost another point in the 11th as too many of his bodyshots continued to stray below the belt, but by then it had become apparent that Johnston was on the verge of defeat, provided the transplanted Mexican could avoid being disqualified. Around the two-minute mark, he drilled Johnston with a right to the head that staggered him. As the stricken fighter stumbled sideways, Lazcano, 33-2-1 (25), stepped in and dropped him a third time with a final right.

The brave but battered Johnston, 35-3-1 (17), was still trying to regain his feet when Durbin wisely entered the ring, forcing Bayless to call a halt at the 2:18 mark. "It was obvious that Stevie was in trouble," said the trainer. "It was time to stop the fight."

"Like I've been telling you, it's my time," said the happy Lazcano, who earned THE RING's number-one lightweight rating with his imposing performance.

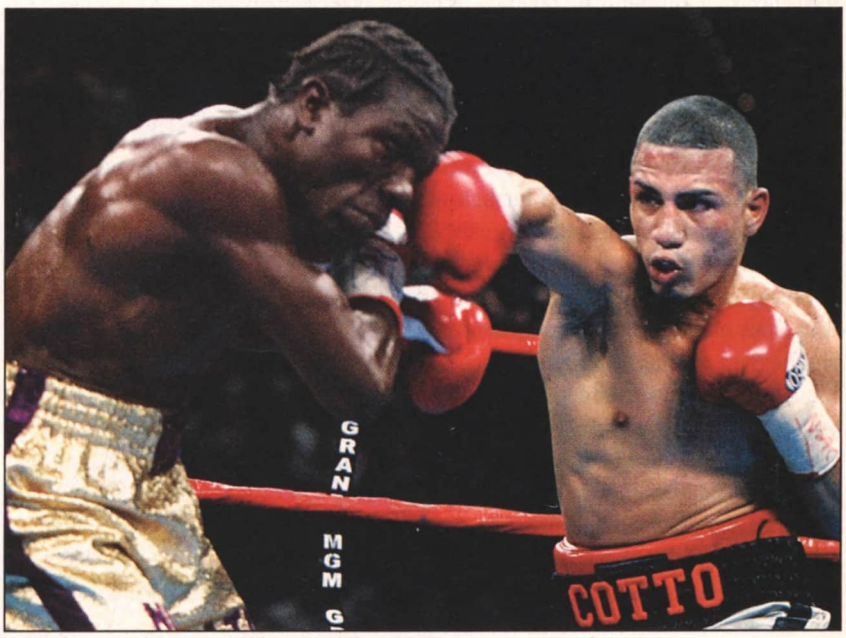
For Johnston, who had been idled by legal problems, the grueling loss looked like the beginning of the end. He still has enough left to beat a lot of 135-pounders, maybe most of them, but he's definitely deteriorated since his two stints as WBC titleholder.

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Top Rank
(9-13-03)
Nigel Collins

Miguel Cotto KO 7 Demetrio Ceballos

Las Vegas, Nevada: In order to keep his Puerto Rican pay-per-view customers happy and hype one of the top prospects in his stable, Bob Arum gave the undefeated Cotto a plum spot on the Shane Mosley-Oscar De La Hoya card against a handpicked opponent. But although Cotto breezed to an effortless seventh-round TKO victory, he failed to give the sort of showcase performance the opportunity called for. Consequently, there was absolutely no buzz from the more than 16,000 fans that packed the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

The 30-year-old Ceballos, who had already suffered kayo defeats at the hands of Mosley, Steve Johnston, and Randall



Cotto scores with a right in snoozer

Bailey, bravely chugged steadily forward, but didn't land a significant blow against the gifted counterpuncher from Caguas. But rather than dazzle, Cotto, 140, merely avoided Ceballos' occasional offerings and did just enough punching to win every round without exerting himself.

Cotto, 22, opened up a bit in the sixth, but didn't seem to really hurt Ceballos, 140, Colon, Panama. The prohibitive favorite still was steadily chipping away in the seventh, when one of Ceballos' cornermen climbed up the ring steps and told referee Vic Drakulich (USA) to stop the fight, which he did at the 2:28 mark. The easy win lifted Cotto's log to 17-0 (14), while Ceballos fell to 26-5 (18).

Since his impressive TKO of former WBC lightweight titleholder Cesar Bazan in February 2003, the quality of Cotto's opposition has retarded somewhat, with no-hopers Joel Perez (KO 4) and Rocky Martinez (KO 2) going bye-bye between the Bazan and Ceballos fights. Does Top Rank matchmaker Bruce Trampler know something the rest of us don't?

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View

(9-13-03)

Nigel Collins

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mesi's about to jump for joy after walloping Williamson

Anthony Mundine W 12 Antwun Echols

Sydney, Australia: It seems unfathomable that a fighter who was knocked out by Sven Ottke could possibly last 12 rounds with "Kid Dynamite" Echols, yet Mundine did precisely that. And he didn't just *last* against Echols; he defeated him, scoring a unanimous decision in front of 12,000 fans at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. The win netted Mundine the bogus WBA super middleweight title, made vacant by Ottke's ascension to "super champ" when the German unified the IBF and WBA belts in March.

Fighting before a partisan hometown crowd, and fighting, he claimed, with an injured rib, Mundine was extremely cautious in the opening round. But in round two, the 28-year-old Aussie began implementing his strategy of jabbing, moving, and holding when necessary, and the impact was two-fold: Mundine negated Echols' dangerous offense, and frustrated him into wasting a lot of energy chasing and missing with powerpunches. In many of the ensuing rounds, picking a winner depended on what you preferred, jabbing and defense, or raw aggression. Echols, 167, Dade City, Florida, did some of his best work in the fifth, scoring with several good shots to the body, but by the seventh, his exhaustion was starting to show, allowing Mundine, 168, to take more chances and follow his jabs with powershots.

Mundine had a fantastic eighth round, scoring with crisp, hard combinations, and by the ninth, Echols, 31, plowing forward rather aimlessly, had a swollen left eye to deal with. Referee Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) didn't help Echols any as he allowed Mundine to hold with impunity, but Echols was also failing to help himself. He outworked Mundine in the 12th, but by then, it was a little bit too late. Judges Pinij Prayadsub (Thailand) and Michael Lee (Korea) both favored Mundine by scores of 117-112, while Erkki Meronon (Finland) had it closer at 115-114.

"He came to fight," said Mundine, 19-1 (14), of Echols, 29-5-1 (26). "I had to duck him and dodge him and sometimes hold him, because he is so dangerous."

The win elevated Mundine to number three in THE RING's ratings, right behind his sole conqueror, Ottke. As the WBA now illogically recognizes both as "champions," a "unification" rematch is a possibility.

Promoter: Tony Mundine Sr.

(9-3-03)

Joe Mesi KO 1 DaVarryl Williamson

Buffalo, New York: Hometown hero Mesi, 232¾, won a few converts outside of Buffalo with his first-round blitzkrieg of Williamson, 209½, Aurora, Colorado, but there were still plenty of detractors who felt Mesi was the beneficiary of yet another bit of calculated matchmaking in this featured bout on HBO's "Night Of Heavyweights: The Next Generation" card. Williamson had been intended as Mesi's most formidable test to date, but it was the second time in four months that Mesi, who iced the usually competent Robert Davis in the same HSBC Arena in June, had snuffed an opponent inside of the three-minute mark.

It didn't help matters that Williamson was surrounded by 13,813 rabidly partisan Mesi fans and was likely intimidated by the moment. This was disappointing to fans who thought they would see Mesi's chin tested by Williamson's vaunted right hand that had been branded "A Touch Of Sleep." After the bell sounded, the only thing the 35-year-old Williamson would meaningfully touch was the canvas.

Williamson was shockingly rigid as the fighters circled in the opening seconds, although the lanky, 6'4" fighter was the first to connect with a long jab. Moments later, Mesi gave a hint of what

was to come when he rushed forward and fell short with a hook as Williamson pulled straight back with his chin fully exposed. It was just a matter of time.

An earnest Mesi landed a few well-placed hooks to the head and body before initiating the real carnage with a lightning bolt of a right hand over Williamson's languishing jab. Williamson stiffened, and Mesi waded in with impunity as he unloaded a salvo with his quicker fists. Although many missed the mark, Mesi finally got in with a left on the point of Williamson's chin that sent him pitching to the canvas.

"I knew it immediately," Mesi said of the final punch. "You just feel it sometimes on your knuckles. And I knew when he went down that he wasn't going to get up."

Referee Wayne Kelly (USA) didn't bother to toll the full count before signaling the end at 1:37 and removing the gumshield from the mouth of Williamson, 18-2 (16).

Mesi, who turns 30 in November, now looks for another bout on HBO, possibly as early as December 6 as a co-feature on the Vitali Klitschko-Kirk Johnson card. And if all goes according to the master plan, Mesi will be returning to Buffalo next summer where he hopes to attract 40,000 of his devoted followers to a big stakes bout against one of the heavyweight elite.

"I'm ready for anybody," Mesi, 27-0 (25), said. "I'm in the [alphabet] top 10 now, so I'm not afraid to get in the ring with anybody. Who do I want? I'd like Tyson or Holyfield. But I'd like to see who's interested in fighting me. Let them bring it to the table and we'll work it out."

Promoter: DiBella Entertainment and Tony Holden Productions
(9-27-03)

Paul Salgado

Dominick Guinn W 10 Duncan Dokiwari

Buffalo, New York: Giant-slayer Guinn, fresh off his attention-getting seventh-round kayo of Michael Grant, tackled another behemoth in the 6'4", 236¾-pound Nigerian Dokiwari. Although he was tabbed as a 4-1 favorite, the 28-year-old Guinn was facing a live underdog in Dokiwari, who took a bronze medal in the '96 Olympics and was on a 10-fight winning streak coming into this fight on the Joe Mesi-DaVarryl Williamson undercard at HSBC Arena.

Brandishing 19 knockouts as part of his 21-1 ledger going into the bout against Guinn, the chiseled Dokiwari, who now resides in Las Vegas, had a reputation as being something of a slugger. Surprise! Dokiwari can box, too—a fact Guinn was enlightened to mere seconds into round one when Dokiwari came out and speared him with a jab and started timing whistling counter right hands. At 218½ pounds, Guinn may have been the diminutive fighter with the reputedly quick hands, but he was shocked to find himself dodging multiple combinations by Dokiwari, who took round one decisively.

In round two, Guinn boxed efficiently behind a disciplined jab before strafing Dokiwari with a right hand that left him teetering. Moments later, the fighters' heads came together, and Dokiwari came away with a gash over his left eye that would bother him for the rest of the bout.

A busy Dokiwari landed thudding combinations in round three, but Guinn began to assert his impressive hand speed in round four. He ripped home pinpoint right hands that aggravated Dokiwari's already free-flowing cut, while his blazing left hooks swelled the larger man's right eye.

Round five provided the entertaining fight's turning point. Early in the round, Dokiwari landed a four-punch combination punctuated by a right uppercut that stiffened Guinn, sending up a roar from the crowd and leaving no question that the fighter from Hot Springs, Arkansas, has a major league chin. But Guinn came back and blitzed Dokiwari with a left hook that had him lurching backward into the ropes on unsteady legs. Moments later, a recovering Dokiwari unleashed a right hand that staggered Guinn, yet Guinn answered with another crisp hook that once again stunned Dokiwari, and proceeded to tee off with a series of shots that swayed the momentum in his favor for the rest of the match.

Dokiwari was constantly wiping blood from his eye as the fight continued on, and in round seven, as referee Jim Santa (USA) separated the two men, Dokiwari leaned over and rubbed his face along the referee's shirt, painting it red in a desperate attempt to cleanse the blood that impaired his vision. Dokiwari continued to fade over the last few heats as Guinn let his hands go to land the majority of punches down the stretch.

Judges John McKaie (USA) and Steve Weisfeld (USA) scored for Guinn, 97-93, as did THE RING, while Don Ackerman (USA) carded 98-92 in favor of Guinn, 23-0 (17).

"I was bleeding for most of the fight and I couldn't see," Dokiwari, 29, would lament in the aftermath. "It was the first time I had been cut in a fight."

Regardless, both men won the admiration of the crowd for their courage.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Guinn jabs a gruesomely bloody Dokiwari

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Gomez zaps Sam with a quick right hook

This was a rare heavyweight fight indeed, one that left us hungry to see both the winner and loser competing against almost any rated heavyweight—or maybe even each other—again.

Television: HBO

Promoter: DiBella Entertainment and Tony Holden Productions (9-27-03)

Paul Salgado

Juan Carlos Gomez W 10 Sinan Samil Sam

Buffalo, New York: With new promoter Sugar Ray Leonard exhorting him to victory from ringside, the southpaw Gomez put on a boxing clinic. When it comes to heavyweights, the fans crave firepower, and former cruiserweight titlist Gomez didn't exactly give that to them in the opener to HBO's "Night Of Heavyweights: The Next Generation" broadcast. Gomez, 213¾, Miami, Florida, via Cuba, ran away with the verdict strictly on the basis of faster hands and fluid lateral movement, leaving a ponderous moving Sam, 236, Germany via Turkey, frustrated in the early going and desperate in the later rounds.

Gomez, 37-0 (31), produced fireworks momentarily in the first round when he unleashed a straight left that took the feet out from underneath Sam, who appeared more startled than hurt as he hit the mat on all fours. Sam bounced back up instantaneously and looked disappointed in himself as referee Charlie Fitch (USA) tolled the eight-count. Neither heavyweight would come close to visiting the canvas afterward, as Gomez dictated the tempo by turning Sam with sweeping foot movement while belaboring him with accurate multipunch combinations to the head.

While it was quickly apparent that Gomez, 30, was no homerun hitter, he elicited a few gasps from the crowd with his ferocious bodywork. Questions about the former cruiserweight's ability to take a heavyweight punch were answered in round three when Sam blasted home a right uppercut that snapped Gomez' head back. Gomez, looking more bemused than hurt, backpedaled as a wide grin creased his face. Although Sam would lose the round, he found a track for his primary weapon, the right hand, which found its mark several times.

Sam did well in rounds four and six by capitalizing on the pockets of action when Gomez wasn't mobile. Yet Gomez swept the balance of the fight, despite a tenuous moment in the seventh when a headbutt opened a gash over his left eye and appeared to momentarily throw him off his game. Sensing an opportunity, Sam, 29, pressed through a hailstorm of punches and landed a counter right with enough thrust to send Gomez' mouthpiece spinning to the canvas. Again, Gomez smiled—this time sticking out his tongue in defiance—and proceeded to redouble his assault to Sam's head and midriff as though he were making him pay for a personal affront. An exhausted Sam, 18-1 (11), who had never fought past eight rounds, walked robotically through the last three rounds as Gomez kept up his frustrating movement and lashed out with stinging punches to secure the lopsided win.

"He confused me," admitted Sam afterward. "He was very quick. I lost my concentration and boxed stupid."

Gomez, dubbed "The Black Panther," praised Sam for his durability, but ultimately saw the fight as a shutout. "I threw a lot of punches out there. He has a really good chin, but I thought I won every minute of every round."

Judge Steve Weisfeld (USA) scored 97-91, while Frank Adams (USA) rendered a 99-90 card. THE RING agreed with Melvina Lathan's (USA) 98-91 verdict.

Promoter: DiBella Entertainment and Tony Holden Productions (9-27-03)

Paul Salgado

Oscar Larios KO 2 Kozo Ishii

Nagoya, Japan: Hard-punching Mexican Larios, 121¾, retained the WBC super bantam belt as he exploded devastating overhand rights, dropped Japanese challenger Ishii, 122, in the first and second rounds, and halted the challenger at 2:02 of the second session in an afternoon bout at Rainbow Hall in Nagoya, Japan. It was Larios' second successful defense of the WBC title.

A longer bout was expected, making the result a disappointment, especially to the local fans who were hoping for an Ishii victory. In the opening canto, Ishii, 26, landed a solid right to the title-holder's cheek. But Larios, also 26, kept jabbing, moving, and looking for openings. When he found those openings, he caught the nervous challenger with vicious overhand rights followed by solid left hooks, sending Ishii down. Ishii barely beat the count, and was saved by the bell.

In round two, Larios, 49-3-1 (34), became more pugnacious and swarmed Ishii with strong overhand rights, flooring him again. Ishii, 31-4 (21), regained his footing, but the Mexican furiously followed up and prompted the intervention of referee Richie Davies (England) with just less than a minute remaining in the round.

Promoter: Tenyu Maruki Promotions

(9-7-03)

Joe Koizumi ■

New Face

(Continued from page 20)

his father, who abandoned the family when he was a baby.

"I even have my grandmother against me," Smith said. "I was tired of playing the he-said, she-said games. I haven't spoken to any of my blood in a few years now. It was real bad. There was a lot of yelling and cursing, and there were a lot of things said that hurt me. My mother basically said that I was never going to make it. She said I was just like my father, and that hurt real bad. I know I'm going to make it, but it cuts very deep."

There was a time in Smith's career when he and his mother were inseparable. Jacqueline was the ubiquitous stage mom who worked Ishe's corner during his highly successful amateur career, along with Charles Shufford Sr., the father of heavyweight Charles Shufford.

After a series of disputed amateur losses, including controversial setbacks to Hector Camacho Jr. at the U.S. Nationals and to Zab Judah in the second round of the '96 Olympic Trials, Ishe thought about turning pro at 17. His mother was in favor of the idea. But because the amateur ranks had left a sour taste in his mouth, Ishe needed a rest from boxing.

"I didn't even want to see boxing on TV," Smith said. "I had lost too many times too close. I was really disgusted with the decisions and I felt I let my mother and my family down. I just didn't want to think about boxing anymore.

"It all kind of hurt when I decided not to turn pro. My mother struggled to be a single parent, and I'm not going to lie, I thought that if I didn't make it, I'd ruin my mother's dreams. But I learned that you never involve family with business decisions. There was something positive I took from that time. It was then that I met my wife and that changed everything."

Latoya convinced him not to give up. Five years later, Smith took the plunge and turned pro. He decided to sign a managerial contract with Jacqueline in 2000. Smith thought that signing with his mom would be just like the old days, when the two would troop around the country, hitting various amateur tournaments and collecting trophy after trophy.

The relationship, however, began to deteriorate quickly, with a complete meltdown coming after Smith's fourth pro fight, a four-rounder against the stubborn Alfonso Garcia on June 15, 2001, in Las Vegas. Smith wasn't pleased with how fast his career was moving, and felt it was time for a managerial change.

"It was a business decision, and a very hard thing to do," Ishe recalled. "It was an ugly breakup and to this day, me and my mother don't speak. It hurts in a way, but then again, it doesn't. I have a family to care for. I have a son, Ishe Jr. I wish it didn't happen, but it happened. Me and my mother don't speak, and I don't even talk to my sister. I have no family."

Smith left his mother's home and temporarily moved into the cramped home of a friend, forced to sleep on the floor. It was the most desperate time of his career, lying there with his pregnant wife, who was six months along carrying Ishe Jr.

"I wasn't making much money, and I couldn't believe I was in this situation," Smith said. "We didn't have a car, and we were just in a bad situation. I have great in-laws, and they got us a place and a car."

Enter manager Mike Levy and trainer Danny Smith (no relation), who have been instrumental in changing Ishe's career path. Danny Smith provided the money for Ishe to file a lawsuit against his mother, but Jacqueline refused to fight it in court. Instead, she just let her son out of the contract.

Since then, Smith has made major career strides. He received great exposure when Fernando Vargas repeatedly mentioned his name for the heated sparring he provided prior to Vargas' showdown with Oscar De La Hoya, and Smith has Gary Shaw to promote him, further strengthening his team.

"Ishe's really turned into a professional since I've been with him," said Danny Smith, who's worked nine fights with Ishe. "He has a better defense, and he sizes up opponents. He's a great counterpuncher now, and he goes to the body more. Everything is great emotionally. He doesn't feel as if he's under any kind of stress."

Ishe has lost track of his mother. She's moved from Las Vegas. Ishe doesn't care. He's moved forward, using the undying support of his wife as his motivation.

"If I didn't have God and my wife, I wouldn't be able to do this," Ishe said. "My wife has been great. I thought about leaving boxing a few times. I thought about getting a job, and she'd say, 'You're not working; you're going to be a champion someday.' If that didn't motivate me, nothing would. I kept at it, and it's paid off. I used to get hurt and I used to cry, and I got down on myself. But I had to be a man, and I had to be stable. I tell people all of the time, 'If you're going to beat me in the ring, you'll have to kill me.' I don't want my son to go through the things I went through. It's not going to happen. I fight for my family and for leaving a legacy in boxing. That's all I care about." ■

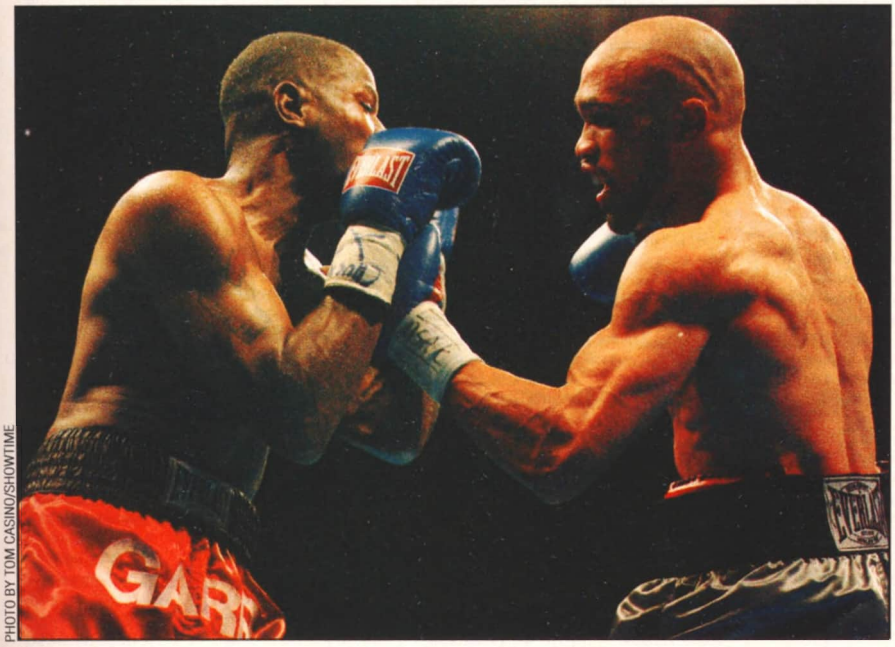


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Veteran Sam Garr catches a left uppercut from Smith in their April '03 bout, which Smith won by wide, unanimous decision. Smith impressed in the* ShoBox *bout, going 10 rounds for the first time.

ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of August 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. David Tua (NZ)
2. Hasim Rahman (USA)
3. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
4. John Ruiz (USA)
5. Mike Tyson (USA)
6. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
7. Evander Holyfield (USA)
8. Fres Oquendo (PR)
9. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
10. Lamon Brewster (USA)
11. Joe Mesi (USA)
12. Faruq Saleem (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
7. Valery Brudov (RUS)
8. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
9. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
10. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
11. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
12. Alexander Petkovic (GER)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Lou Del Valle (USA)
3. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
4. Manuel Siaca (PR)
5. Bruno Girard (FRA)
6. David Telesco (USA)
7. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
8. George Jones (USA)
9. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
10. Montell Griffin (USA)
11. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
12. Silvio Branco (ITA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
5. Eric Lucas (CAN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Byron Mitchell (USA)
8. Brian Magee (GB)
9. Francisco Mora (ARG)
10. Charles Brewer (USA)
11. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
12. Jeff Lacy (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Evans Ashira (DEN)
7. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
8. Jermain Taylor (USA)
9. Wayne Alexander (GB)
10. Derrell Coley (USA)
11. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
12. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Champ: Alejandro T. Garcia (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
3. Travis Simms (USA)
4. Shane Mosley (USA)
5. Fernando Vargas (USA)
6. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
7. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
8. J.C. Candelo (COL)
9. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
10. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
11. Kassim Ouma (GHA)
12. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
6. Vernon Forrest (USA)
7. James Hare (GB)
8. Kermit Cintron (PR)
9. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
10. Teddy Reid (USA)
11. Chris Smith (USA)
12. Hwanyung Park (KOR)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Vacant
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
7. Miguel Cotto (PR)
8. Randall Bailey (USA)
9. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
10. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
11. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
12. Andreas Kotelnik (GER)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Lakva Sim (MON)
4. Juan Lazcano (USA)
5. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Phillip Ndou (SA)
8. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
9. Courtney Burton (USA)
10. Michael Clark (USA)
11. Julio Diaz (MEX)
12. Billy Irwin (CAN)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
3. Diego Corrales (USA)
4. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
5. Randy Suico (PHIL)
6. Steve Forbes (USA)
7. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
8. Nate Campbell (USA)
9. Alex Arthur (GB)
10. Mike Anchondo (USA)
11. Mzonke Fana (SA)
12. Cassius Baloyi (SA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
2. Injin Chi (KOR)
3. Chris John (IND)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Michael Brodie (GB)
6. Spend Abazi (DEN)
7. Victor Polo (COL)
8. Oscar Leon (COL)
9. William Abelyan (ARM)
10. Zahir Raheem (USA)
11. Orlando Salido (MEX)
12. Cyril Thomas (FRA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
4. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
5. Osamu Sato (JAP)
6. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
7. Yober Ortega (VEN)
8. Jose Rojas (VEN)
9. Paulie Ayala (USA)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
12. Nathan Sting (AUSTRL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Vacant
2. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
3. Tim Austin (USA)
4. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
5. Leo Gamez (VEN)
6. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
7. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
8. Diego Morales (MEX)
9. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
10. David Guerault (GB)
11. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
12. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
3. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
4. Kohei Matsuura (JAP)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
7. Jose Navarro (USA)
8. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
10. Martin Castillo (MEX)
11. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
12. Gabula Vabaza (SA)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
4. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
5. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
6. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
7. Damaen Kelly (GB)
8. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
9. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
10. Brian Viloria (USA)
11. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
12. Angel Priolo (COL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
3. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
4. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
5. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
6. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
7. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
8. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
9. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
10. Yosam Choi (KOR)
11. Alex Sanchez (PR)
12. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
5. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
6. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
7. Eriberto Gijon (PHIL)
8. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
9. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
10. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
11. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
12. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of August 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Hasim Rahman (USA)
2. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
3. Mike Tyson (USA)
4. Evander Holyfield (USA)
5. David Tua (NZ)
6. Lamon Brewster (USA)
7. John Ruiz (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
10. Oliver McCall (USA)
11. Joe Mesi (USA)
12. Fres Oquendo (USA)
13. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
14. Jameel McCline (USA)
15. Faruq Saleem (USA)
16. Danny Williams (GB)
17. Dominick Guinn (USA)
18. Henry Akinwande (NIG)
19. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)
20. Jeremy Williams (USA)
21. Lou Savarese (USA)
22. Lance Whitaker (USA)
23. Larry Donald (USA)
24. Saul Montana (MEX)
25. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
26. Clifford Etienne (USA)
27. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
28. Cedric Boswell (USA)
29. Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)
30. Samuel Peter (NIG)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. Louis Azille (DR)
4. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
5. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
6. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
7. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
8. Rudiger May (GER)
9. Sebastiaan Rothman (SA)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Pavel Melkomian (RUS)
12. Rydell Booker (USA)
13. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
14. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
15. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
16. Ezra Sellers (USA)
17. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
18. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
19. Ravea Springs (USA)
20. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
21. Turan Bagci (TUR)
22. Alain Simon (FRA)
23. Michael Simms (USA)
24. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
25. Mark Hobson (GB)
26. Felix Cora (USA)
27. Kelvin Davis (USA)
28. Jorge Kahwagi (MEX)
29. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
30. Valery Brudov (RUS)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)
1. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
2. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
3. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
4. Stipe Drews (CRO)
5. Montell Griffin (USA)
6. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
7. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
8. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
9. George Jones (USA)
10. Jesus Ruiz (MEX)
11. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
12. Eric Harding (USA)
13. Darren Corbett (IRE)
14. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
15. Derrick Harmon (USA)
16. Tony Oakey (GB)
17. Michael Rush (USA)
18. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
19. Alejandro Lakatus (ROM)
20. Richard Hall (JAM)
21. Zsolt Erdei (HUN)
22. Silvio Branco (ITA)
23. Hugo Garay (ARG)
24. Orlando Rivera (PR)
25. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
26. Elvis Michailenko (LAT)
27. Madjid Zaim (FRA)
28. Rodney Toney (USA)
29. Ron Simms (USA)
30. Jackson Chanet (FRA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)
1. Eric Lucas (CAN)
2. Danilo Haussler (GER)
3. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
6. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
7. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
8. Charles Brewer (USA)
9. Jeff Lacy (USA)
10. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
11. Henry Porras (CR)
12. Brian Magee (GB)
13. Scott Pemberton (USA)
14. Andre Thysse (SA)
15. Robin Reid (GB)
16. Kabary Salem (EGY)
17. Oscar Bravo (USA)
18. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
19. Glenn Catley (GB)
20. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
21. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
22. Carmine Tufano (USA)
23. Mario Veit (GER)
24. Omar Sheika (USA)
25. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
26. Willie Stewart (USA)
27. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
28. Victor Oganov (RUS)
29. Charles Adamu (GHA)
30. James Lubwana (UGA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
5. Wayne Alexander (GB)
6. Eric Mitchell (USA)
7. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
8. Evans Ashira (KEN)
9. Jermain Taylor (USA)
10. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
11. Raymond Joval (HOL)
12. Epifanio Mendoza (COL)
13. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
14. Quentin Smith (USA)
15. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
16. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
17. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
18. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
19. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
20. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
21. Bert Schenk (GER)
22. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
23. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
24. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
25. Yoshinori Araki (JAP)
26. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
27. Yuri Tsarenko (BELA)
28. Jesse Brinkley (USA)
29. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
30. Anthony Bonsante (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)
1. Fernando Vargas (USA)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Kassim Ouma (USA)
5. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
6. Alex Bunema (USA)
7. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
8. J.C. Candelo (COL)
9. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
10. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
11. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
12. Raul Marquez (USA)
13. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
14. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
15. Toshiharu Kaneyama (JAP)
16. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
17. Michael Rask (DEN)
18. Julio Garcia (CUB)
19. Rodney Jones (USA)
20. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
21. Angel Hernandez (MEX)
22. Travis Simms (USA)
23. Richard Williams (GB)
24. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)
25. Shawn Garnett (USA)
26. Jamie Moore (GB)
27. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
28. Michael Lerma (USA)
29. Akhmed Oligov (RUS)
30. Tshepo Mashego (SA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Vernon Forrest (USA)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
5. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
6. Michel Trabant (GER)
7. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Teddy Reid (USA)
10. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)
11. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
12. Christian Bladt (DEN)
13. Paolo Roberto (SWE)
14. Ishe Smith (USA)
15. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
16. Michele Orlando (ITA)
17. Frederic Klose (FRA)
18. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
19. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
20. Ernesto Carmona (MEX)
21. Neil Sinclair (GB)
22. Joel Julio (COL)
23. James Hare (GB)
24. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
25. Chris Smith (USA)
26. Kermit Cintron (USA)
27. Eduardo Bejarano (ARG)
28. Christopher Henry (BAR)
29. Freddy Hernandez (MEX)
30. Anthony Thompson (USA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
6. Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
8. James Leija (USA)
9. Jason Cook (GB)
10. Omar Weis (ARG)
11. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
12. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
13. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
14. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
15. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
16. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
17. Carlos Maussa (COL)

18. Eamonn Magee (GB)
19. Junior Witter (GB)
20. Alex Trujillo (PR)
21. Ricardo Williams (USA)
22. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
23. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
24. Victor Kpadenou (GHA)
25. Jose Areli Lopez (MEX)
26. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
27. Alvaro Aguilar (MEX)
28. Carlos Mairena (NIC)
29. Samuel Malinga (SA)
30. Eduardo Gomez (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
6. Juan Diaz (MEX)
7. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
8. Julio Diaz (USA)
9. Aldo Rios (ARG)
10. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
11. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
12. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
13. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
14. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
15. Courtney Burton (USA)
16. David Burke (GB)
17. Michael Clark (USA)
18. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
19. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
20. Lamar Murphy (USA)
21. Graham Earl (GB)
22. Billy Irwin (CAN)
23. Steve Quinonez (USA)
24. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
25. Ameth Diaz (PAN)
26. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
27. Mat Zegan (POL)
28. Steve Forbes (USA)
29. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
30. Juliano Ramos (ARG)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jesus Chavez (USA)
1. Randy Suico (PHIL)
2. Mzonke Fana (SA)
3. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
4. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
5. Affif Djelti (FRA)
6. Diego Corrales (USA)
7. Zahir Raheem (USA)
8. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
9. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
10. Mike Anchondo (USA)
11. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
12. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
13. Nate Campbell (USA)
14. Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
15. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
16. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
17. Daniel Attah (NIG)
18. Orlando Salido (MEX)
19. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
20. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
21. Alex Arthur (GB)
22. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
23. Manuel Bocanegra (MEX)
24. Steve Luevano (USA)
25. Tiger Martinez (USA)
26. Cesar Soriano (MEX)
27. Craig Docherty (GB)
28. Yongsoo Choi (KOR)
29. Daniel Dominguez (MEX)
30. Oscar Tinajero (MEX)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
4. William Abelyan (USA)
5. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
6. Luis Fuente (MEX)
7. Rocky Juarez (USA)
8. Spend Abazi (DEN)
9. Guty Espadas (MEX)
10. Osamu Sato (JAP)
11. Humberto Soto (MEX)
12. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
13. Takalani Ndlovu (SA)
14. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
15. Whyber Garcia (PAN)
16. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
17. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
18. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
19. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
20. Nicky Cook (GB)
21. Vuyani Bungu (SA)
22. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
23. Angel Chacon (PR)
24. George Priest Smalls (USA)
25. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
26. Hector Marquez (MEX)
27. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
28. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
29. David Murillo (MEX)
30. Choi Tseveenpurev (MON)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Napapol Kiattisakchocchoi (THAI)
2. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
3. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
4. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
5. Paulie Ayala (USA)
6. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
7. Willie Jorrin (USA)
8. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
9. Jose Rojas (VEN)
10. David Donis (USA)
11. Yoshikane Nakajima (JAP)
12. Jimrex Jaca (PHIL)
13. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
14. Pedrito Laurente (PHIL)
15. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
16. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
17. Art Simonyan (USA)
18. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
19. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
20. Marcos Licona (MEX)
21. Eduardo Garcia (MEX)
22. Sergio Medina (ARG)
23. Esham Pickering (GB)
24. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
25. Fernando Beltran Jr. (MEX)
26. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
27. Sammy Ventura (MEX)
28. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
29. Martin Honorio (MEX)
30. Cristobal Cruz (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Genaro Garcia (USA)
4. David Guerault (FRA)
5. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
6. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
7. Julio Zarate (MEX)
8. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
10. Noel Wilders (GB)
11. Tim Austin (USA)
12. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
13. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
14. Moises Castro (NIC)
15. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
16. Pete Frissina (USA)
17. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
18. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
19. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
20. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
21. Jess Maca (PHIL)
22. Jesus Perez (COL)
23. Vusi Malinga (SA)
24. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
25. Steve Molitor (CAN)
26. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
27. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
28. Anyetei Laryea (GHA)
29. Nicky Booth (GB)
30. Silence Mabuza (SA)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
6. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
7. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
8. Martin Castillo (MEX)
9. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
10. Peter Culshaw (GB)
11. Jose Navarro (USA)
12. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
13. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
14. Eiji Kojima (JAP)
15. Felix Machado (VEN)
16. Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)
17. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
18. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
19. Sergio Perez (MEX)
20. Jose Beranza (MEX)
21. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
22. Shin Ogata (JAP)
23. Karim Quibir (SPA)
24. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
25. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
26. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
27. Kohei Matsuura (JAP)
28. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
29. Neddy Garcia (USA)
30. Ali Rohmad (INDO)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
4. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
5. Brian Viloria (USA)
6. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
7. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
8. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
9. Jair Jimenez (COL)
10. Damaen Kelly (GB)
11. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
12. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
13. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
14. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
15. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
16. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)
17. Koji Koyama (JAP)
18. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
19. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
20. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
21. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
22. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
23. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
24. Horacio Chicagual (ARG)
25. Julio Ler (ARG)
26. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
27. Jose Araiza (MEX)
28. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
29. Jason Booth (GB)
30. Sherwin Paro (PHIL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
3. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
4. Yosam Choi (KOR)
5. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
6. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
7. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
8. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
9. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
10. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
11. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
12. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
13. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
14. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
15. Omar Nino (MEX)
16. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
17. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
18. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
19. Juan Centeno (NIC)
20. Steve Msimango (SA)
21. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
22. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
23. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)
24. Armand De La Cruz (PHIL)
25. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
26. Jun Kitano (JAP)
27. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
28. Angelo Dottin (PAN)
29. Edgar Sosa (MEX)
30. Bert Batawang (PHIL)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
2. Eagle Akakura (JAP)
3. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
4. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
5. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
6. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
7. Khulile Makeba (SA)
8. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
9. Juan Palacios (NIC)
10. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
11. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
12. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
13. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
14. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
15. Ulises Solis (MEX)
16. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
17. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
18. Eduardo Marquez (NIC)
19. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
20. Omar Soto (MEX)
21. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
22. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
23. Francisco Rosas (MEX)
24. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
25. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
26. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
27. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
28. Iwan Key (INDO)
29. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
30. Emilio Aguelican (MEX)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of August 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Fres Oquendo (USA)
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. John Ruiz (USA)
6. Evander Holyfield (USA)
7. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
8. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
9. Mike Tyson (USA)
10. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: James Toney (USA)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Ezra Sellers (USA)
4. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
5. Virgil Hill (USA)
6. Kelvin Davis (USA)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
9. Alex Petkovic (RUS)
10. Louis Azille (USA)
11. Dale Brown (CAN)
12. Kenny Keene (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
4. Clinton Woods (GB)
5. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
6. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
7. Montell Griffin (USA)
8. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
9. Stipe Drews (CRO)
10. Richard Hall (USA)
11. George Jones (USA)
12. Eric Harding (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Vacant
2. Danilo Haussler (GER)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Charles Brewer (USA)
5. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
6. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
7. Jeff Lacy (USA)
8. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
9. Mario Veit (GER)
10. Byron Mitchell (USA)
11. Antwun Echols (USA)
12. Danny Green (AUSTRL)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Howard Eastman (GB)
4. Bert Schenk (GER)
5. Raymond Joval (HOL)
6. Evans Ashira (GUY)
7. Jermain Taylor (USA)
8. Bea Diallo (LIB)
9. Derrell Coley (USA)
10. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
11. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
12. Aaron Mitchell (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Kassim Ouma (USA)
2. J.C. Candelo (USA)
3. Verno Phillips (USA)
4. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
5. Emmett Linton (USA)
6. Shane Mosley (USA)
7. Angel Hernandez (USA)
8. Fernando Vargas (USA)
9. Julio Garcia (USA)
10. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
11. Travis Simms (USA)
12. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. James Hare (ENG)
5. Jose Celaya (USA)
6. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
7. Michele Trabant (GER)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Christian Bladt (DEN)
10. Vernon Forrest (USA)
11. Kermit Cintron (USA)
12. Teddy Reid (USA)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
4. Omar Weis (ARG)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Mike Stewart (USA)
7. Paul Spadafora (USA)
8. Miguel Cotto (USA)
9. James Leija (USA)
10. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
11. Lovemore Ndou (AUSTRL)
12. Carlos Vilches (ARG)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
2. Levander Johnson (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
5. Julio Diaz (USA)
6. Courtney Burton (USA)
7. Juan Lazcano (USA)
8. Steve Johnston (USA)
9. Angel Manfredy (USA)
10. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
11. Michael Clark (USA)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)
1. Steve Forbes
2. Vacant
3. Joel Casamayor (USA)
4. Diego Corrales (USA)
5. David Santos (USA)
6. Phillip Ndou (SA)
7. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
8. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (THAI)
9. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
10. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
11. Alex Arthur (ENG)
12. Nate Campbell (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. William Abelyan (USA)
5. Michael Brodie (ENG)
6. Orlando Salido (MEX)
7. In Jin Chi (KOR)
8. Zahir Raheem (USA)
9. Rocky Juarez (USA)
10. Oscar Leon (PR)
11. Victor Polo (COL)
12. Guty Espadas (MEX)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. David Donis (USA)
6. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
7. F. Rakkiatgym (THAI)
8. Fernando Velardez (USA)
9. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
10. Art Simonyan (USA)
11. Diego Morales (MEX)
12. Walter Estrada (COL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)
1. Pete Frissina (USA)
2. Tim Austin (USA)
3. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
4. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
5. David Guerault (FRA)
6. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
7. Jesus Perez (COL)
8. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
9. Noel Wilders (GB)
10. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
11. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)
12. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Felix Machado (VEN)
4. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Martin Castillo (MEX)
7. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
8. Angel Priolo (COL)
9. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
10. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
11. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
12. Adonis Rivas (NIC)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
4. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
5. Damaen Kelly (GB)
6. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
7. Jair Jimenez (COL)
8. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
9. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
10. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
11. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
12. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
5. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
6. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
7. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
8. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
9. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
10. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

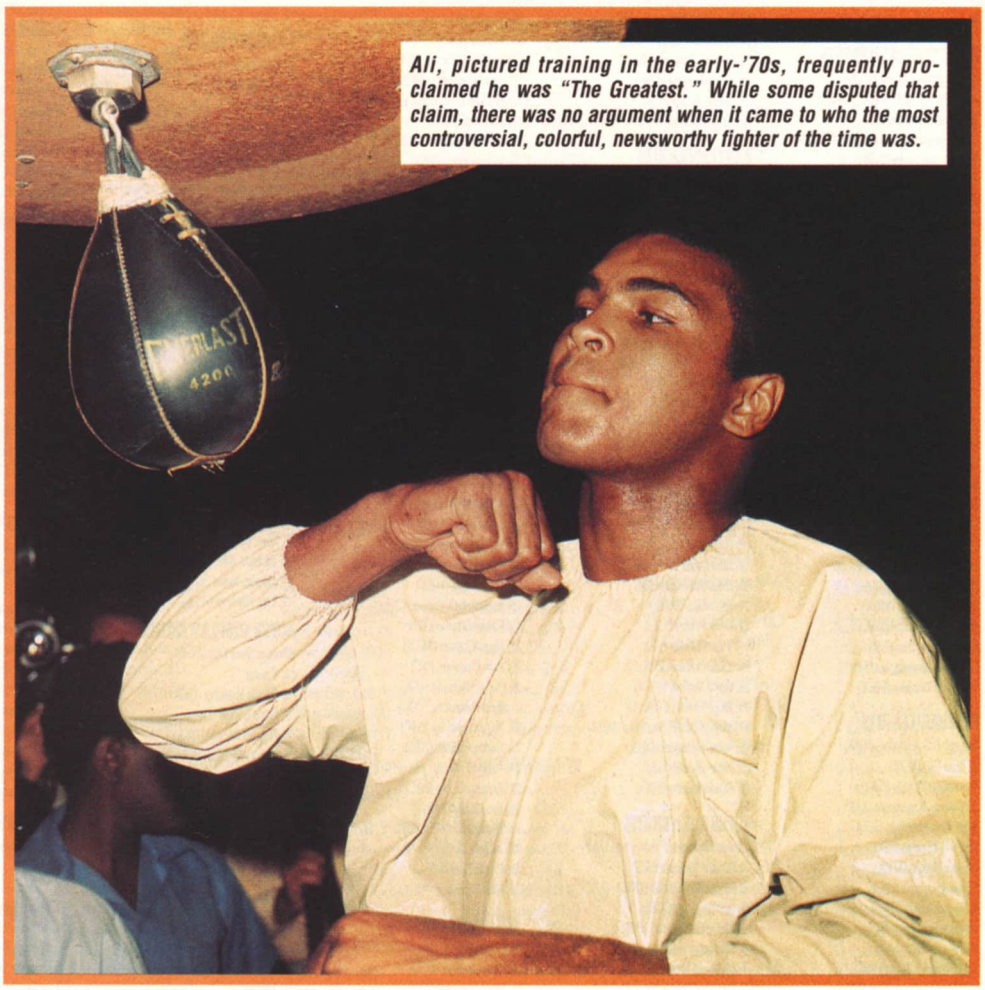
MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
5. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
6. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
7. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
8. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
9. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
10. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
11. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
12. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)

CLASSIC

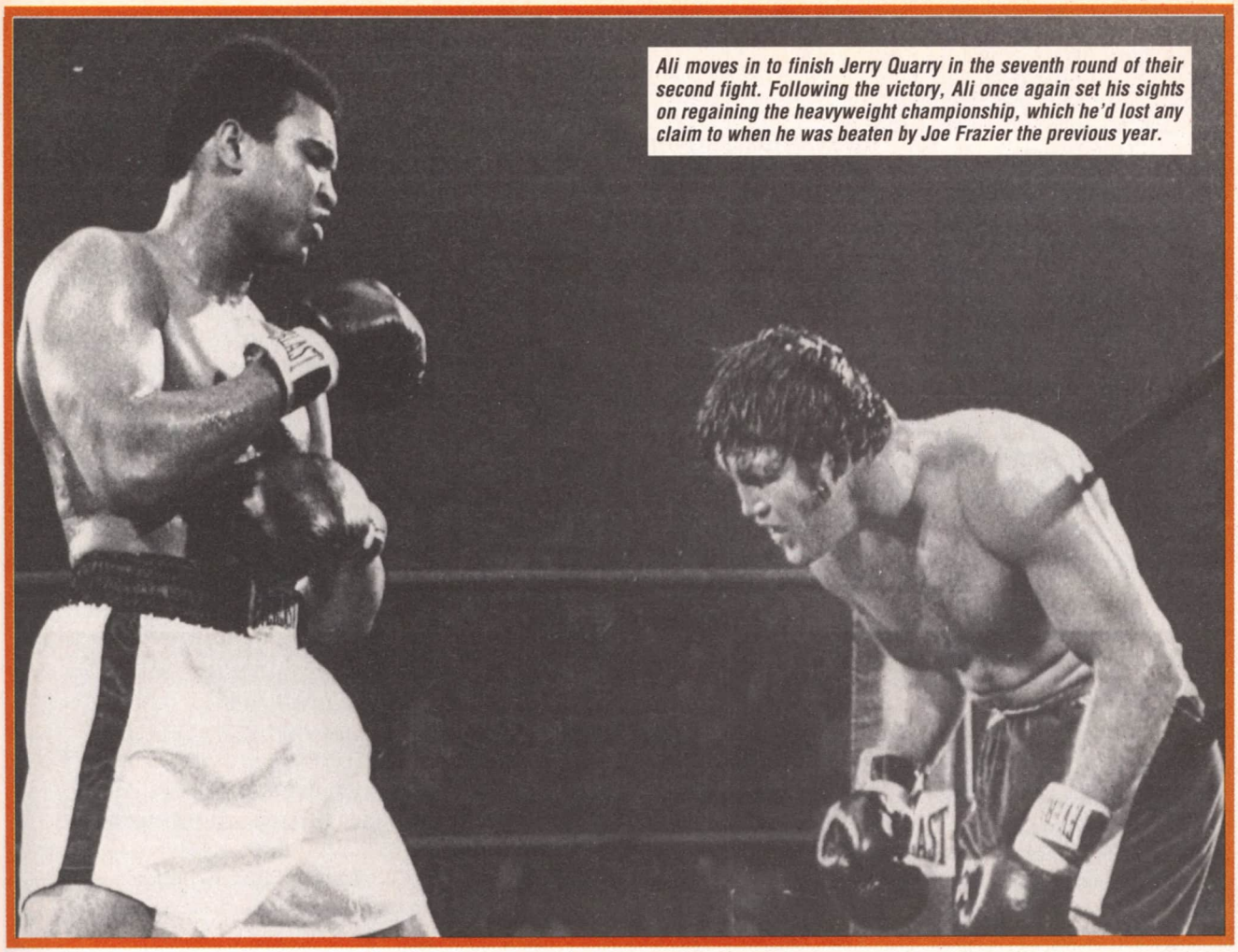
From THE RING, December 1972

CLAY

EVANGELIST, BOXER, SHOWMAN



Ali, pictured training in the early-'70s, frequently proclaimed he was "The Greatest." While some disputed that claim, there was no argument when it came to who the most controversial, colorful, newsworthy fighter of the time was.



Ali moves in to finish Jerry Quarry in the seventh round of their second fight. Following the victory, Ali once again set his sights on regaining the heavyweight championship, which he'd lost any claim to when he was beaten by Joe Frazier the previous year.

By Shirley Norman

I am the prettiest!
I am the greatest!
When you're as great as I am you can't be humble!

Whether one agrees or not with the above pronouncements, one cannot question that their author is one of the most colorful, controversial, newsworthy figures in all the world. For he is the one and only Muhammad Ali, alias Cassius Clay, or the other way around.

In Las Vegas, Nevada, Muhammad Ali emerged victorious from a match in the city's Convention Center. Ali had teased, tormented, and trounced his hapless opponent, Jerry Quarry, and chased him into retirement.

Ali now has but one goal to go: to regain the world heavyweight championship—the title he forfeited by a retirement, which proved only temporary.

Muhammad Ali fears no man in the world. But his special disdain is reserved for Joe Frazier, the heavyweight champion. In his own inimitable language Ali announces: "That man got no business with my title. I'm pretty—he's ugly. I'm the champ—he's a chump. I'm so fast I'm gonna hit him before God gets the news!"

Muhammad worships God, he says. He worships his Muslim religion, he says. He worships his own brain and brawn.

What really makes this turbulent man tick is a question the world has been asking since he erupted on the boxing scene a decade ago. Our female fascination and curiosity sought the answer during Ali's training sessions, held at the Colosseum of Las Vegas' Caesars Palace.

These training bouts were open to the public and drew more spectators than the performance of any show business celebrity.

For Muhammad Ali is a showman par excellence. His boxing skills are augmented by grandstand plays that comprise flurries of action and torrents of words, quips, and barbs.

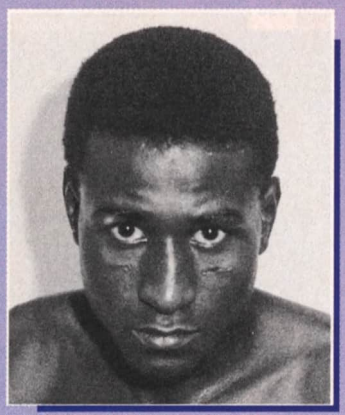
Since he is the flagrant essence of a show business "ham," Ali was asked if he'd ever considered becoming a movie actor. The champ grinned and replied, "Sure, I'd be an actor if I could be as good as maybe Charlton Heston. But I don't have the right connections ... or the right complexion."

In his dressing room after an afternoon training bout, Muhammad Ali held court for members of the press. From every corner of the world, the men of all media—newspaper, radio, and television—had come to interview this fighter.

This writer was the only woman allowed in this masculine stronghold. In this case, it was "Ladies last." The gentlemen of the press finished their sports-slanted coverage and departed. And we began our in-depth study of the fighter.

Ali had stepped from the shower and wrapped himself in a white terry cloth robe. Nervous gestures and apparent

THE RING RATINGS, December 1972



Alfonso Frazier

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joe Frazier, Philadelphia, PA
1. **Muhammad Ali,** Cherry Hill, NJ
2. **George Foreman,** Hayward, CA
3. **Jose Luis Garcia,** Venezuela
4. **Jimmy Ellis,** Louisville, KY
5. **Floyd Patterson,** New Paltz, NY
6. **Oscar Bonavena,** Argentina
7. **Ron Lyle,** Denver, CO
8. **Jurgen Blin,** Germany
9. **Jose Roman,** Puerto Rico
10. **Ken Norton,** San Diego, CA

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Bob Foster, Washington, D.C.
1. **Andy Kendall,** Portland, OR
2. **Pierre Fourie,** South Africa
3. **Eddie Owens,** Springfield, MA
4. **Chris Finnegan,** England
5. **Pat O'Connor,** Rochester, MN
6. **Len Hutchins,** Detroit, MI
7. **Avenamar Peralta,** Argentina
8. **Sarel Aucamp,** South Africa
9. **John Frankham,** England
10. **Mike Quarry,** Los Angeles, CA

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos Monzon, Argentina
1. **Emile Griffith,** New York, NY
2. **Miguel De Oliviera,** Brazil
3. **Tony Mundine,** Australia
4. **Jean-Claude Bouttier,** France
5. **Koichi Wajima,** Japan
6. **Bennie Briscoe,** Philadelphia, PA
7. **Nate Collins,** San Francisco, CA
8. **Tom Bogs,** Denmark
9. **Juan Carlos Duran,** Italy
10. **Bunny Sterling,** England

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jose Napoles, Mexico
1. **Hedgemon Lewis,** Detroit, MI
2. **Clyde Gray,** Canada
3. **Billy Backus,** Syracuse, NY
4. **Roger Menetrey,** France
5. **Ernie Lopez,** Las Vegas, NV
6. **Jack Tillman,** Mobile, AL
7. **Armando Muniz,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Adolph Pruitt,** St. Louis, MO
9. **Buddy Boggs,** Baltimore, MD
10. **Ryu Sorimachi,** Japan

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Alfonso Frazier, Panama
1. **Bruno Arcari,** Italy
2. **Rodolfo Gonzalez,** Long Beach, CA
3. **Victor Ortiz,** Puerto Rico
4. **Eddie Perkins,** Chicago, IL
5. **Carlos Gimenez,** Argentina
6. **Roger Zami,** France
7. **Joao Henrique,** Brazil
8. **Romano Fanali,** Italy
9. **Joe Tetteh,** Ghana
10. **Piero Ceru,** Italy

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Roberto Duran, Panama
1. **Chango Carmona,** Mexico
2. **Ken Buchanan,** Scotland
3. **Esteban DeJesus,** Puerto Rico
4. **Ray Lampkin,** Portland, OR
5. **Mando Ramos,** Long Beach, CA
6. **Antonio Puddu,** Italy
7. **Pedro Carrasco,** Spain
8. **Ruben Navarro,** Los Angeles, CA
9. **Raul Venedrini,** Argentina
10. **Miguel Velazquez,** Spain

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ben Villaflor, Philippines
1. **Victor Echegaray,** Argentina
2. **Sammy Goss,** Trenton NJ
3. **Alfredo Marcano,** Venezuela
4. **Frankie Otero,** Miami, FL
5. **Frankie Crawford,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Walter Seeley,** Sayville, NY
7. **Jose Fernandez,** Dominican Republic
8. **Love Allotey,** Ghana
9. **Jose Luis Lopez,** Mexico
10. **William Martinez,** Nicaragua

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Clemente Sanchez, Mexico
1. **Ricardo Arredondo,** Mexico
2. **Ernesto Marcel,** Panama
3. **Eder Jofre,** Brazil
4. **Kuniaki Shibata,** Japan
5. **Arnold Taylor,** South Africa
6. **Bob Allotey,** Ghana
7. **Ruben Olivares,** Mexico
8. **Enrique Garcia,** Mexico
9. **Jesus Alonso,** Mexico
10. **Danny Lopez,** Los Angeles, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Enrique Pinder, Panama
1. **Rodolfo Martinez,** Mexico
2. **Chartchai Chionoi,** Thailand
3. **Augustin Senin,** Spain
4. **Chucho Castillo,** Mexico
5. **Romero Anaya,** Mexico
6. **Rafael Herrera,** Mexico
7. **Octavio Gomez,** Mexico
8. **Johnny Clark,** England
9. **Dave Needham,** England
10. **Paddy Maguire,** Ireland

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Erbito Salvarria, Philippines
1. **Betulio Gonzalez,** Venezuela
2. **Masao Ohba,** Japan
3. **Venich Borkorsor,** Thailand
4. **Fritz Chervet,** Switzerland
5. **Henry Nissen,** Australia
6. **Miguel Canto,** Mexico
7. **Osamu Haba,** Japan
8. **Tony Moreno,** San Antonio, TX
9. **Socrates Batoto,** Philippines
10. **Lorenzo Gutierrez,** Mexico

fatigue were pacified by splashes of alcohol and sips of water. And also by Angelo Dundee, and Clay's brother, Rahaman Ali, the one man the champ concedes may be handsomer than he is.

Muhammad Ali, we discovered, is a complexity of contrasts. He is a showman and a savior … he is arrogant but compassionate … he is worldly yet idealistic.

Even Muhammad's physical countenance is a complete enigma. "Pretty" he is, beyond a doubt. Set in a handsome bronzed "baby face" are pouting lips and a mischievous grin. Set in the same pretty face are a pair of black eyes that burn like coals.

When Muhammad speaks, one dare not interrupt—lest the sparks fly from a lethal look.

In Ali's dressing room, the arrogance so apparent in a boxing ring was gone, and in its place was the passion of a man dedicated to a purpose which, in his own words is, "the salvation of 30 million so-called negroes in this world."

"This is my destiny," declared Muhammad. "God put me on this Earth and made me famous so I could solve the problems of my people. We're gonna fix all these troubles with dope, prostitution, lack of education, and everything else. Only an American black can lead the way. And a black who is famous and respected like me."

The Muslim religion, Ali says, will be the salvation of the world. He is obsessively devoted to its teachings. "People don't know much about the Muslim religion," Ali expounded. "There ain't just Black Muslims. There's white Muslims, Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian—every kind you can think of. They're all over this world.

"A Muslim means: 'One who submits to God's will.' And we're gonna bring peace and joy to this messed-up world. The world is full of evils and temptations. Sodom and Gomorrah—that's what it's become. But we're gonna straighten it out!"

Ali the boxer then became Ali the missionary as he preached: "Boxing's a good livelihood, but someday I'm gonna be too old to box. And then I'm gonna travel all over the world spreading the word of God. I been preaching, between fights, at a lot of colleges in this country. You should see me dressed in a suit and carrying a briefcase. I look like a real businessman. Of course, I'm still pretty."

The fact that he is "pretty"—and famous—and the essence of masculinity attracts women to Muhammad like bees to honey.

"It's really my art of personality that attracts women," said Ali. "Women fall more in love with your wisdom than with your physical beauty."

Ali is married for the second time. He divorced his first wife because "she wouldn't follow all the Muslim dictates like she promised."

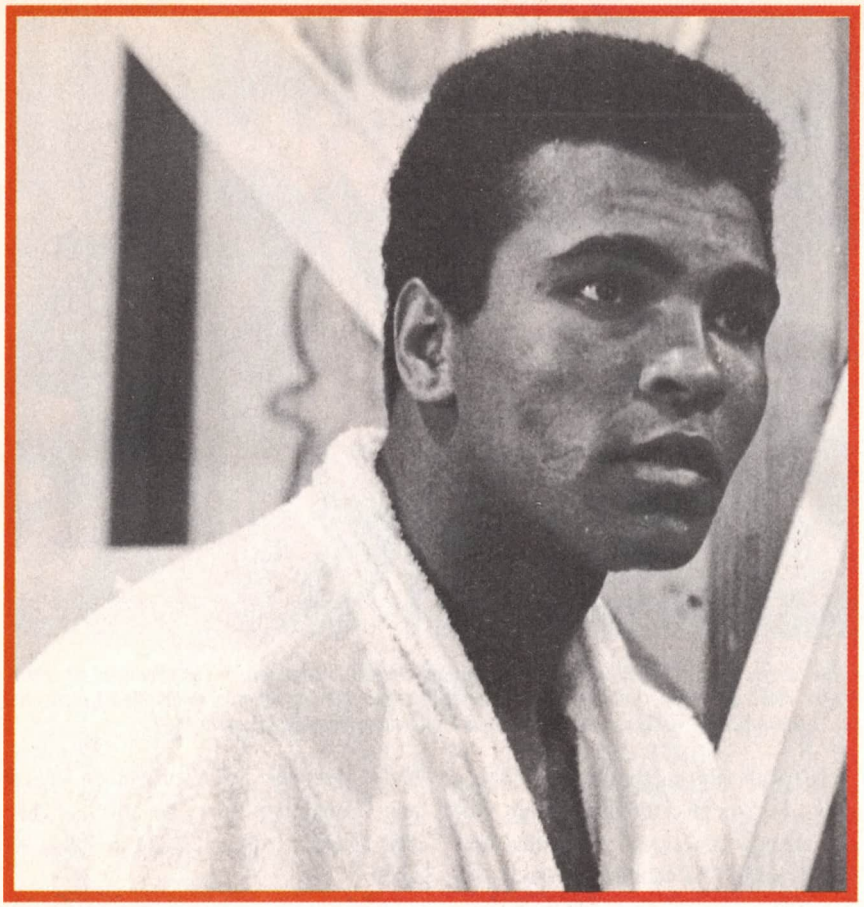
His second marriage has produced three daughters and a son who is named Muhammad Ali Jr. "He's awfully pretty," boasted the proud papa, "just like me! But I don't want him to be a boxer when he grows up. You miss too much living. And after all, how many can be as great as me?

At his press conferences, Ali always demonstrated himself to be as great a showman as he was a fighter. And when Ali got rolling with his mouth, it was in the best interest of the media members not to interrupt him—unless they wanted to be shot a nasty glare by the ex-champ.

"My wife," Ali continued, "stays away from the hotel and away from all these temptations in Las Vegas. She don't even come to my fights. We both want to have at least six more kids. I never have to worry about my wife lookin' at other men. But lots of other men's wives, they're always after me. I don't like to hurt anybody's feelings. So when women say to me: 'Honey, you're so beautiful,' I just say: 'Thanks baby, but right now I'm so tired.'"

Muhammad's personal fidelity may be fact or fable. One could only observe that, during his 10-day reign in Las Vegas, he was constantly surrounded by women. Everywhere Ali went, the girls went, numbering from one to a dozen of the most beautiful black girls in the world.

Ali, shown here with Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, is a devout follower of the Muslim faith. The Muslim religion, Ali said, would be the salvation of the world.



Ali's handsome looks attracted women of all races, though the fighter claimed his "pretty" face actually wasn't the key. "It's really my art that attracts women," Ali claimed. "Women fall more in love with your wisdom than with your physical beauty."

ring shoes. He wandered around the suite accepting congratulations in an off-hand manner that implied, "Did you have any doubt I'd win?"

Brother Rahaman Ali seemed more elated than the champ himself. "Did you enjoy the fight?" asked Rahaman. "You know," he advised us, "we could have finished Quarry off in the first round, but Muhammad felt that the people who traveled here from all over the country deserved a show for their time and money. Just wait 'till the next fight with Joe Frazier. You're gonna see a different story!"

Muhammad Ali's casual dress and the equally casual party refreshments (watermelon and 7-Up) did not deter the bevy of black beauties who lounged around his suite, their long-lashed eyes following his every move, their lovely faces obviously eager for a single word or nod of recognition from their idol.

The genial Angelo Dundee, his son, and your reporter were among the few white guests at the party. Muhammad is like a mountain when it comes to the mixing of races. With finger pointing and eyes flashing, he exclaimed during our interview: "God made people in dif-

All over Caesars Palace, the females stalked their idol, in the coffee shop (devouring his favorite food—watermelon), in the casino, or at the bar. Muhammad used the bar stools merely as a resting place. Liquor is taboo on two counts: his Muslim religion and his training schedule.

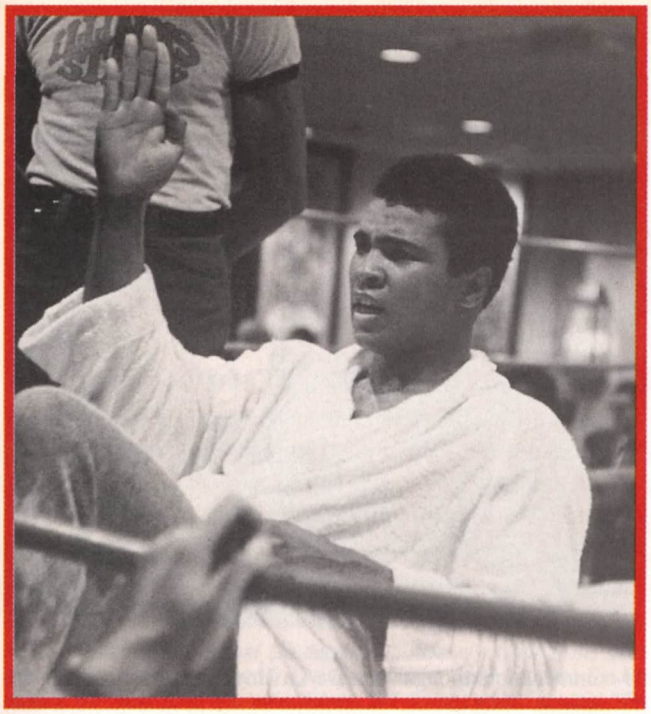
The rugged sport of boxing is traditionally a man's domain. But Ali's training sessions attracted hundreds of the fair sex each afternoon. Women sat spellbound as Ali displayed the physical prowess of his body and the verbal prowess of his never-quiet mouth.

One lonely lady who never missed a training session yelled boldly across the Colosseum, "Please tell me where your dressing room is." And the champ snorted, "I won't tell you because I'm married."

After Ali had whipped Jerry Quarry, he partied with his special friends at a reception in his suite. The elite of the black world were present, including such luminaries as Harry Belafonte.

Muhammad Ali, in his role as host, was dressed in a gray sweatshirt and black

Though Ali was happily married to Belinda and was a father of three daughters and a son, women still followed him around everywhere he went. Whether it was the truth or not, Ali insisted to the media that he turned down all of his female pursuers.



Even though he didn't wear the heavyweight belt at the time, Ali continued to insist, "I'm the world's champion—and not just in the boxing ring. I'm the true world champion of all races, religions, and countries."

ferent races and colors and he meant for them to stay that way.

"I don't mean anybody should hate any other race, but you got to stay with your own. Every race has its own great heritage, so why mix it up and lose it? If I had a blonde, blue-eyed baby, it would be a disgrace! And it's also a disgrace, some of these black entertainers, now that they're rich and famous they marry whites. They got black bodies and white minds. Anybody who don't love his own can't be trusted."

Ali the showman and Ali the preacher are separate entities. Ali is adamant when he says that he cares nothing for fame or fortune. "My being famous is God's destiny for me," he insists. "That's so I can use my influence to help my people and help the whole world."

Although the gate receipts from a Muhammad Ali fight are big and Ali's personal purse runs to fancy figures, the feisty fighter contends that he cares nothing for wealth.

"Money don't mean nothing," he exploded. "Look at Howard Hughes. That man got to be miserable. And the Kennedys—all that tragedy around them. I'm rich in happiness and health, and that's the things that count."

Back came the arrogance, as Ali concluded, "I'm the world's champion, and not just in the boxing ring. I'm the true world champion of all races, religions, and countries. Everybody was born for a purpose. And I am gonna fulfill my destiny and bring peace and happiness to all the world, and especially to my own people, the 30 million so-called Negroes on this earth."

Such is the proclamation of the most flamboyant figure in boxing history—Muhammad Ali, boxer ... showman ... evangelist. Muhammad Ali, a man consumed today by two burning ambitions: to reign once more as the world heavyweight champion, and to be idolized as the world champion of all humanity! ■

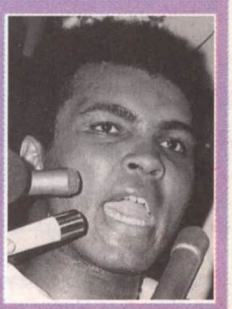
THE RING, December 1972

The Cover: The flamboyant Muhammad Ali, always ready with an attention-grabbing quote, raved about being pretty, about his destiny, and about bringing peace to the world after his career. The complex Ali held deep religious convictions and yearned for a rematch against heavyweight champ Joe Frazier.

Ortiz Calls It Quits: In a bout between two former lightweight champions on the comeback trail, recently dethroned Ken Buchanan dominated Carlos Ortiz en route to a sixth-round stoppage. While the victory left Buchanan near the top of the lightweight heap, the 36-year-old Ortiz announced his retirement after the fight.

U.S. Seales Up Just One Gold: Ray Seales was the only gold medal winner for America at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, but U.S. amateur officials did not push the panic button and remained optimistic about the future. They felt the American fighters were victimized by several controversial decisions at the Games.

Early Lessons Learned: Many great champions suffered early defeats, before learning from them and becoming legends. Archie Moore (pictured) lost three times to Shorty Hogue as a young man, but improved and kayoed Hogue in the their fourth meeting, and went on to become an all-time great.



Fighter Of The Month: Three months after beating Quarry, Ali whupped up on the ancient Floyd Patterson to earn the honors for the December '72 issue. Ali, who had already beaten Patterson seven years earlier, won easily in seven rounds and then bragged loud and long.

Come Out Writing

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

MOSLEY-DE LA HOYA REACTION

I just finished watching the second De La Hoya-Mosley fight, and I am still in shock. We are constantly complaining about fighters dodging good fighters and taking the easy road by fighting weak opposition. But when a fighter gives us his all and reminds us why we love the sport so much, that fighter ends up getting robbed. I feel like I just watched the De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad fight all over again. Shame on the judges!

JORGE ROMERO
Philadelphia, PA

I believe the reason that the HBO commentators thought that De La Hoya won his rematch with Mosley is because of the lopsided information provided by CompuBox. Those of us who have been inside the ring know that most of Oscar's punches were jabs that either bounced off of Mosley's gloves or barely touched him. Shane was never stunned or hurt, while De La Hoya got hurt on many occasions and had slowed significantly by the ninth round. Coincidentally, I scored the fight 115-113 in Mosley's favor, just as the judges saw it.

DAVID MURIELLA
Toronto, Ontario

Boxing is a sport that governs itself with unwritten rules. For example, it's always been said that in order to dethrone a champion, you must take it from him by beating him decisively. But because this rule is unofficial and open to interpretation, it's impossible to enforce. The recent De La Hoya-Mosley rematch illustrated just how subjective this unwritten rule is.

At the end of 12 competitive rounds, the judges awarded Sugar Shane with a surprising unanimous decision victory. Surprising because in a close fight where many rounds appeared to be even, De La Hoya, as the champion, figured to receive the benefit of the doubt. Although they should not automatically be given to a champion, even rounds often indicate that the challenger has failed to "take it away" from the champion.

Regardless of the sport, championships should not be won by default. Likewise, they should not be lost in the same manner. De La Hoya deserved to retain his title against Mosley. Unfortunately, there is no *written* rule that says so.

ADAM FRISCA
Pottstown, PA

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

***The Ring* received more mail about the Mosley-De La Hoya II decision than any other topic in recent memory. Reader Jorge Romero was among the many who thought De La Hoya was robbed. Other readers, such as David Muriella, thought the punch stats misled many viewers and the judges' scores were right on.**

I watched the De La Hoya-Mosley fight with some friends and we were all sure that Oscar won. When I first heard the decision, I was pretty upset. But after hearing that not only all three judges had the fight 115-113 Mosley, but also that much of the media had the exact same decision, I began to think that maybe I missed something. I also thought it was odd that the decision didn't get too bad of a response from the crowd.

After my friends went home (very upset), I watched

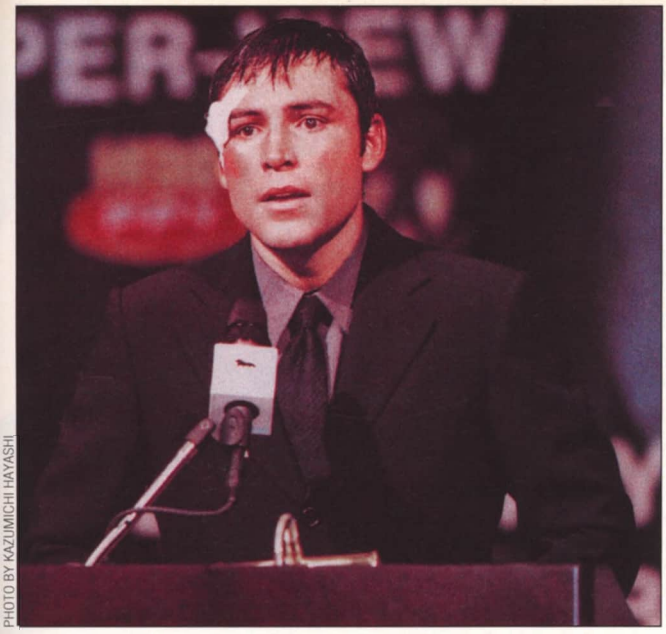


PHOTO BY KAZUMICHI HAYASHI

De La Hoya complains about the decision in Mosley's favor at the post-fight press conference. Reader Lee Iverson was upset because Oscar's whining detracted from Mosley's victory, and Iverson points out that "The Golden Boy" has always been a sore loser.

the fight again. This time, I taped a piece of paper over the bottom of the TV screen so I couldn't see the punch stat numbers and I turned the sound off so I didn't have to hear the opinions of the commentators. I thought this would be more like the view of the judges, but I really didn't expect to see anything different. Much to my surprise, I discovered that CompuBox numbers are far from accurate. Most of the punches that Oscar got credit for landing did not land at all, especially the jabs. If you watch closely, most of Oscar's punches were just a little bit short. Shane stayed just barely out Oscar's reach. This happened for almost the entire fight. Mosley also landed the harder and more telling blows of the fight. When I scored the fight a second time, I found three rounds that I wasn't sure about, so I gave them all to Oscar. Even after that, when I added my scores at the end of the fight, I had it 115-113 for Mosley!

MATT FIELDS
Fayette, OH

My hat goes off to Shane Mosley, a true champion. The poise and class he showed during De La Hoya's postfight tirade proved that he's a gentleman. I found it disappointing that Mosley's moment in the sun was eclipsed by De La Hoya's whining. This is nothing new. Oscar has always been a sore loser, whether controversial or not. I find it hilarious that he made the statement: "I'm doing this for boxing."

Well, Golden Crusader, while you're at it, don't forget to get the Pernell Whitaker and Ike Quartey victories you have overturned as well.

LEE IVERSON
New York, NY

I was never a big fan of Oscar De La Hoya, but I thought he won his second fight with Sugar Shane Mosley. Yes, the fight was close, but it was Oscar who controlled the bout and landed more punches. Of course, Shane had his moments, especially in round nine when he battered The Golden Boy, but to give Shane all of the last five rounds was outrageous. Even Mosley was surprised when it was announced that he won the bout. I feel sorry for Oscar. I just hope that The Golden Boy won't retire because of this event. He means so much to boxing.

ROMMEL FERRIOL BERNARDO
Manila, Philippines

After some ugly decisions, not to mention out of the ring escapades on the part of fighters, I had distanced myself from the sport for quite a few years. However, the last couple of years I started buying THE RING again, going to fights, watching on TV, and even buying a few pay-per-views. But after the decision in favor of Shane Mosley in his rematch with Oscar De La Hoya, I am abandoning the sport once more. There is no disguising the fact that something is wrong with the way the system operates, and, worse yet, it was laid out there for the world to see. I've been suckered in for last time.

JERRY DAVIS
El Paso, TX

ANOTHER SCORING CONTROVERSY

If Chris Byrd won that fight with Fres Oquendo, then elephants can fly. I don't know what it will take, but there must be a way to assure that championship bouts have the best judges in the world officiating. I say: Shoot the bad judges! It would only take one or two before everything would come around.

JIM SWEEDEN
Newport, OR

I thought Fres Oquendo clearly beat Chris Byrd. This is one of the worst decisions I've ever seen. I scored the fight for Fres, 118-111, or 9-2-1 in rounds. Oquendo landed the more effective punches. He also, amazingly, outjabbed Byrd. I hope THE RING will recognize this robbery and give Oquendo a deserved rating among the top 10 heavyweights.

JUSTIN HOPEY
Madbury, NH

NOT SO TOUGH

If Ricardo Mayorga is so tough, why is he smoking a wussy filtered cigarette on the cover of the December 2003 issue of THE RING?

ED CHABEREK
Superior, MI ■

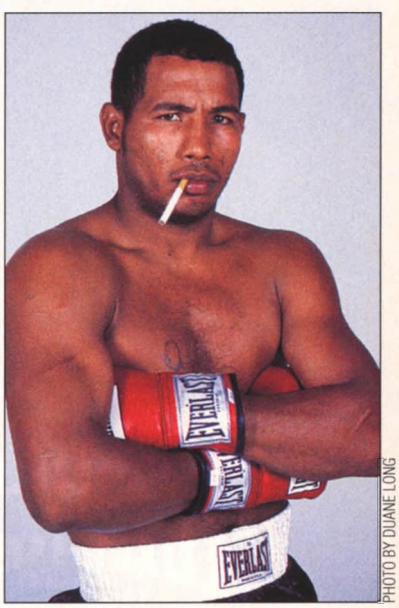


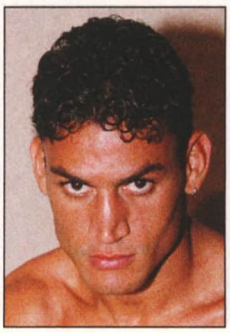
PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

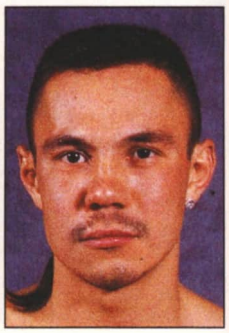
The photo of Ricardo Mayorga smoking a cigarette on the cover of the December issue of THE RING caused quite a stir. Some purists were upset, but reader Ed Chaberek had a different take on the situation.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

SHOWTIME'S SHOW TIMES ALL SET





Freitas & Tszyu: Headline Showtime's early-'04 offerings

Tired of committing to lame dinner parties with your wife and her friends on a Saturday night only to discover too late that you're going to have to miss a major fight because of those obligations? Well, at least as far as Showtime's *Championship Boxing* events are concerned, in 2004 you won't have to wait until the last minute to find out which Saturdays are going to be fight nights. You can circle them on your calendars right now: January 3, February 7, March 6, April 3, May 1, June 5, July 3, August 7, September 4, October 2, November 6, and December 4—the first Saturday of every month.

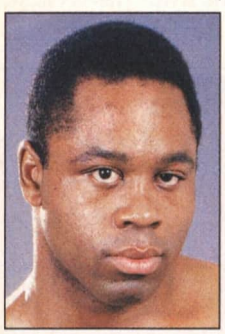
"Everyone agreed that it was easier to promote this way," said Showtime publicist **Marina Cappuro**. "It was [Showtime boxing chief] **Jay Larkin's** idea, and everyone signed off on it."

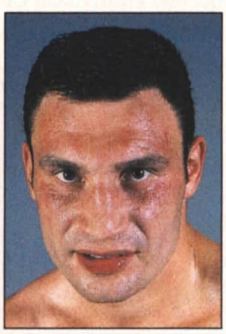
So now that we know the dates of the 2004 *Showtime Championship Boxing* broadcasts, the next thing we want to know is what the fights will be. Here's the info we have on the first two cards: The January show will be headlined by top-rated junior lightweight **Acelino Freitas** (possibly against **Joel Casamayor**—cross your fingers), and the February show will be the Moscow rematch between world junior welter champ **Kostya Tszyu** and top contender **Sharmba Mitchell**. There will be co-features on both shows, but as of mid-October, Showtime wasn't sure what they'd be.

Cappuro said the *ShoBox* schedule is still up in the air, but she confirmed that the show would definitely be returning in '04. It, too, may have a once-a-month schedule, but nothing was certain regarding that as of press time.

HEAVY HAPPENINGS IN DECEMBER

One week before the massive **Don King**-promoted show in Atlantic City that we've previewed in great detail in this magazine *(page 36)*, HBO will broadcast a show just as massive, in a manner of speaking. On December 6, most likely at Madison Square Garden, heavyweight title contender **Vitali Klitschko** will take a risky fight against skilled veteran **Kirk Johnson**, and in the co-feature, undefeated **"Baby" Joe Mesi**—a top-15-ish heavyweight with his eye on the top 10—takes another baby step forward against **Monte Barrett**, arguably his best all-around opponent to date.





Johnson & Klitschko: Important duel on December 6

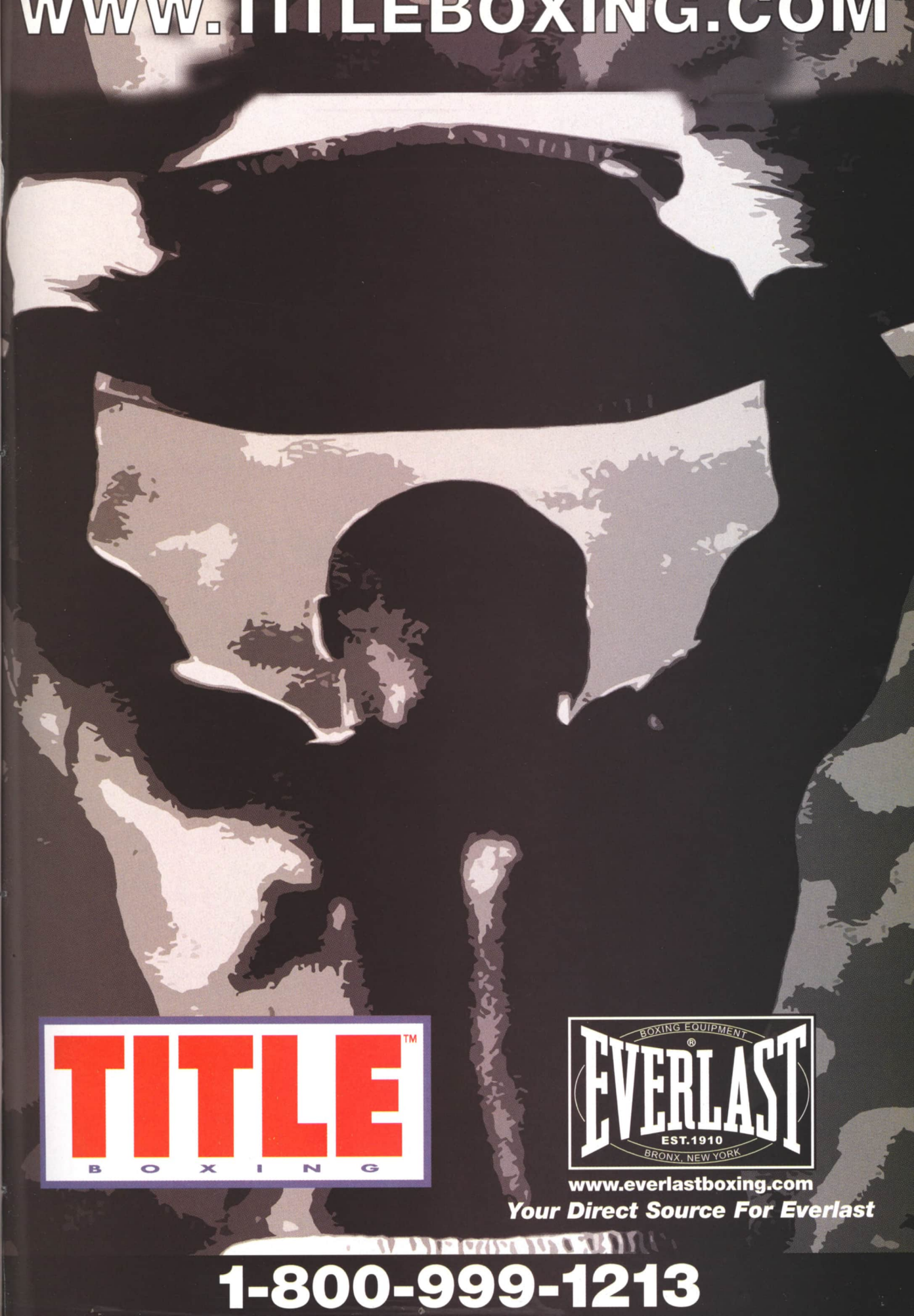
The Klitschko-Johnson fight is an ironic bit of matchmaking, as it was Johnson who pulled out of his fight with **Lennox Lewis** in June, making way for Klitschko to challenge—and nearly kayo—the champ. Now Klitschko, who could have gotten away with fighting a gimme as he waits to see if Lewis is going to give him a rematch, is returning the favor to Johnson and granting him a chance at the big time.

"I give Klitschko credit for fighting a guy like Kirk," Johnson's promoter, **Dino Duva**, told the *Halifax Herald*. "I think it's great that two top heavyweights like this want to fight each other."

As for Mesi and Barrett, you couldn't call them two top heavyweights at this point, but it is a matchup that makes sense in New York (Mesi is from Buffalo, Barrett is from Queens) and could prove competitive—which is just what boxing fans are hoping for as we try to figure out how far Mesi can go. At the least, the sturdy, experienced Barrett, whose only losses have come against gigantic heavies **Wladimir Klitschko** and **Lance Whitaker**, figures to get out of the first round, something's Mesi's last two opponents have failed to do.

LISTEN UP

In the last hours before we went to press, rumors began surfacing that discussions were underway for a possible **Mike Tyson-James Toney** showdown in 2004 ... The **Fernando Vargas-Tony Marshall** fight, which was postponed due to Vargas' back injury, has been rescheduled for December 12 on Telefutura ... Meanwhile, with Vargas not expected to be ready to fight again in time for the January 31 date HBO had him penciled in for, Top Rank is getting the date instead of Main Events and will feature welterweight **Antonio Margarito** against an opponent to be determined ... **Erik Morales'** first real test as a junior lightweight will come against WBC beltholder **Jesus Chavez** sometime in February. ■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